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India, China reach deal on easing LAC tensions

Both arrive at an agreement on patrolling arrangements and resolution of all remaining friction points, says Foreign Secretary; gone back to where the situation was in 2020, disengagement process completed, says Jaishankar; announcement comes a day before the BRICS summit which PM Modi and Chinese President Xi are scheduled to attend

[GS Paper II: India-China Relations](#)

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and China have reached an agreement on the "patrolling arrangements" and the resolution of the military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Union government announced on Monday, in a breakthrough that officials told *The Hindu* include the remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang.

The announcement by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri came during a press briefing on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia for the BRICS summit on Tuesday. Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to attend the event.

"Over the last several weeks, Indian and Chinese diplomatic and military negotiators have been in close contact with each

other in a variety of forums, and as a result of these discussions, agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the LAC in the India-China border areas, leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020," Mr. Misri said, adding that the two sides would now take the "next steps" on this.

A few hours later, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed the importance of the agreement on patrolling, which had come to a stop in 2020, after which the two sides accepted "buffer zones" in some areas of dispute that denied the militaries their normal patrolling routes.

While the External Affairs Ministry did not give further details of the agreement, and whether the "buffer zones" would continue to exist for patrolling

Run-up to resolution

The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in the stand-off along the Line of Actual Control since May 2020. India announced that it has reached agreements on patrolling and other issues

June-July 2024: Minister Jaishankar meets Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Almaty, Vientiane

July-August: Working mechanism of diplomats, military holds meetings in Delhi, Beijing

September: National Security Adviser Ajit Doval meets Wang Yi in St. Petersburg

October: Military commanders, diplomats meet at LAC points



Major headway: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri made the announcement on the breakthrough during a press briefing on PM Narendra Modi's visit to Russia on Tuesday. PTI

purposes, Mr. Misri said the two sides had "reached an agreement on the issues that were being discussed".

"With that we have gone back to where the situation was in 2020. With that we can say the disengagement process with China has been completed," Mr. Jaishankar said in an interview to the television chan-

nel NDTV.

In the past, the government has said that disengagement would only constitute the beginning and that normalcy at the LAC would only follow after "deinduction and demobilisation" of troops that China had amassed at the LAC, leading to counter-deployments by India.

The timing of the an-

ouncement, just a day before the BRICS summit, indicates that a meeting between Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi, which has been speculated about, is now more likely to take place.

Although the two leaders met as many as 18 times between 2014 and 2020, they have spoken publicly only twice since the clashes in the Galwan Valley.

Significantly, the Chinese government did not announce or comment on the border agreement on Monday.

Possible meeting

Asked about a possible meeting between the leaders, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian said they would inform "if anything comes up".

Mr. Misri did not confirm a meeting between the leaders either, but said the government was discussing a number of bilateral meetings in Kazan, the venue of the BRICS summit.

"[BRICS] is a multilateral event, though, of course, there is always a provision for bilateral meetings on the sidelines. We are currently looking into the overall programme of the Prime Minister. There are a number of requests for bi-

lateral meetings, and we will update you on the bilaterals as they evolve," the Foreign Secretary said, not denying that a meeting with the Chinese leader was among those.

Mr. Misri, who was previously India's Ambassador to China and likely a key part of the recent negotiations, did not give further details of the agreement between two sides.

He referred to the recent meetings that led to the breakthrough, including two meetings between Mr. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in June-July, two meetings of the WMCC mechanism of diplomatic and military officials in July-August, followed by a meeting in September between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Mr. Wang.

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India, China reach deal on easing LAC tensions (22 October)

Both arrive at an agreement on patrolling arrangements and resolution of all remaining friction points, says Foreign Secretary; gone back to where the situation was in 2020, disengagement process completed, says Jaishankar;



announcement comes a day before the BRICS summit which PM Modi and Chinese President Xi are scheduled to attend

- India and China reached an agreement on “patrolling arrangements” and resolving military standoffs at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The announcement was made by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri during a press briefing on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Russia for the BRICS summit.
- The agreement includes addressing remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang.
- Misri stated that Indian and Chinese negotiators had been in close contact over several weeks, resulting in this breakthrough.
- The agreement leads to disengagement and resolution of issues that arose in 2020.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed the importance of the agreement, which restores patrolling that had stopped in 2020.
- The two sides accepted “buffer zones” in some areas, impacting normal patrolling routes.
- Details on whether buffer zones will continue for patrolling purposes were not provided.
- Jaishankar indicated that the disengagement process with China has been completed.
- The Indian government previously stated that normalcy at the LAC would require deinduction and demobilization of troops.
- The Chinese government did not comment on the border agreement.
- There is speculation about a possible meeting between Modi and Xi at the BRICS summit.
- Misri mentioned that discussions on various bilateral meetings are ongoing, including a potential meeting with the Chinese leader.
- He highlighted recent negotiations, including meetings between Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and discussions involving National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.
- The timing of the announcement before the BRICS summit suggests a higher likelihood of a Modi-Xi meeting.
- Modi and Xi have met 18 times between 2014 and 2020 but have publicly spoken only twice since the Galwan Valley clashes.



Source: The post



'Laws for minority institutions do not breach secularism'

GS Paper II: Preamble and Fundamental Rights

The Supreme Court on Monday made a point that laws which regulate institutions run by religious or linguistic minorities, for that very reason alone, cannot be accused of breaching secularism.

The oral observation by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a three-judge Bench, was hearing a challenge to a decision of the Allahabad High Court to strike down the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education Act, 2004. The Act regulated madrasas in the State. The High Court concluded that the law violated the principles of secularism. It had ordered the transfer of their students, especially those in recognised madrasas, to regular schools. Petitioners claimed in the top court that the verdict had affected the lives of nearly 17 lakh students spread across 16,000 madrasas in Uttar Pradesh.

"A law per se regulating an institution belonging to a particular community does not *ipso facto* [by the fact itself] offend the principle of secularism," the Chief Justice observed.

The CJI referred to another Act in the same context, The Hindu Religious Endowments and Charitable Institutions Act, which provided for the "proper administration of religious institutions... and is there in all States from Maharashtra to Tamil Nadu".

The Chief Justice said a State had a right to legislate to improve the excellence of a government-aided minority-run institution.

"It is within a State's vi-



It is within a State's vital interest. These are young children who come to madrasas. They need a broad-based education...
D.Y. CHANDRACHUD
Chief Justice of India

tal interest. These are young children who come to madrasas. They need a broad-based education... They should learn the essentials of subjects required to lead a proper life, so they become worthy citizens," the CJI observed.

Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy said the 2004 Act was a regulatory statute of the State of Uttar Pradesh. "The High Court conflated regulations with religious instructions and concluded the law violated secularism," Ms. Guruswamy submitted.

The Chief Justice pointed out that Article 30 enabled minorities to establish and administer their institutions which were not entirely confined to teaching of their religion. "There is no compulsion that a Buddhist institution should teach only Buddhism," the CJI remarked.

Petitioners argued that the High Court had found that madrasas violated Article 28 of the Constitution, which prohibited "religious instruction" in educational institutions fully funded by the State.

The court would resume the hearing on October 22.





‘Laws for minority institutions do not breach secularism’(22 October)

- The Supreme Court stated that laws regulating institutions run by religious or linguistic minorities do not inherently breach secularism.
- Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud made this observation while hearing a challenge to the Allahabad High Court's decision to strike down the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education Act, 2004.
- The Act was aimed at regulating madrasas in Uttar Pradesh.
- The High Court ruled that the law violated secular principles and ordered the transfer of students from recognized madrasas to regular schools.
- Petitioners claimed the verdict affected nearly 17 lakh students across 16,000 madrasas in the state.
- The Chief Justice noted that a law regulating a community institution does not automatically offend secularism.
- He referenced The Hindu Religious Endowments and Charitable Institutions Act, which governs the administration of religious institutions across various states.
- The Chief Justice affirmed that states have the right to legislate to enhance the quality of government-aided minority-run institutions.
- He emphasized the importance of broad-based education for young children in madrasas to help them become worthy citizens.
- Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy argued that the 2004 Act was a regulatory statute, and the High Court conflated regulations with religious instruction.
- The Chief Justice highlighted Article 30, which allows minorities to establish and manage institutions that may not focus solely on their religion.
- Petitioners contended that the High Court found madrasas violated Article 28, which prohibits "religious instruction" in fully state-funded educational institutions.
- The court will resume the hearing on October 22.



Kerala HC asks Chief Secretary, DGP, two Collectors to appear in contempt case

[GS Paper II: Contempt of Court](#)

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Monday ordered the Chief Secretary, Director-General of Police (DGP), and the Collectors of Ernakulam and Palakkad to appear in person before it on November 8 for framing of contempt of court charges against them for not complying with its directive to take possession of six churches under the control of the Jacobite faction

in the Malankara Church.

Justice V.G. Arun passed the order when the contempt of court petitions filed by vicars of the Orthodox faction came up for hearing. The court observed that “as charges have to be framed, respondents shall personally be present before the court on November 8, 2024”.

A Division Bench had last week on Thursday upheld Justice Arun’s order directing the Collectors to take possession of

the churches. It gave the order while dismissing the appeals filed by the State government and Jacobite faction vicars against the single judge’s order. In their appeals, the government and the vicars contended that the single judge had exceeded its jurisdiction by issuing the directive to take possession of the churches. They said a single judge could not issue a directive to implement a judgment while dealing with a petition filed

under the provisions of Contempt of Courts Act.

The Bench had observed that the court could not and should not rest by passing a punitive order against the contemnor. It was the duty of the court to see to that its order was implemented and the contemnor did not enjoy the benefits he had derived by violating the court’s order. If this was not done, the entire process of law and justice would become a farce, it had added.

Kerala HC asks Chief Secretary, DGP, two Collectors to appear in contempt case (22 October)

- The Kerala High Court ordered the Chief Secretary, Director-General of Police (DGP), and Collectors of Ernakulam and Palakkad to appear in person on November 8 for potential contempt of court charges.
- This action is due to their failure to comply with a directive to take possession of six churches controlled by the Jacobite faction of the Malankara Church.
- Justice V.G. Arun issued the order during the hearing of contempt petitions filed by vicars of the Orthodox faction.
- The court emphasized that charges need to be framed, necessitating the personal presence of the respondents on November 8, 2024.
- A Division Bench upheld Justice Arun’s order, which directed the Collectors to take possession of the churches.
- The Bench dismissed appeals from the State government and Jacobite faction vicars against the single judge’s order.
- The government and vicars argued that the single judge exceeded jurisdiction by issuing such a directive.
- They claimed a single judge could not direct the implementation of a judgment while handling a petition under the Contempt of Courts Act.



- The Bench noted that the court has a duty to ensure its orders are implemented and that the contemnor should not benefit from violating the court's order.
- The Bench warned that failing to enforce court orders would undermine the entire process of law and justice.

Contempt of Court

The **Contempt of Court** in India is governed by the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**, and the constitutional provisions under **Article 129** and **Article 142**. It ensures that the judiciary's authority is respected, and any act that undermines its dignity is punishable. Contempt of court cases often involve disobedience or disrespect towards court orders, judgments, or other actions that harm the functioning of the judiciary.

Types of Contempt of Court:

There are two types of contempt:

1. **Civil Contempt:**
 - Defined under **Section 2(b)** of the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**, civil contempt refers to the wilful disobedience of any judgment, decree, direction, or order of a court, or wilful breach of an undertaking given to a court.
2. **Criminal Contempt:**
 - Defined under **Section 2(c)** of the Act, criminal contempt refers to acts that scandalize or lower the authority of the court, interfere with the due course of judicial proceedings, or obstruct the administration of justice.

Constitutional Provisions:

1. **Article 129:** Grants the Supreme Court the power to punish for its contempt.
2. **Article 215:** Grants the High Courts similar powers to punish for contempt.

Important Cases:

1. **Prashant Bhushan Contempt Case (2020):** Lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan was found guilty of contempt for his tweets criticizing the Chief Justice of India and the Supreme Court. The case reignited discussions on the balance between free speech and the judiciary's authority.
2. **Arundhati Roy Contempt Case (2002):** Author Arundhati Roy was found guilty of contempt of court for writing an article criticizing the judiciary's handling of environmental issues.

Key Facts:

- **Punishment for Contempt:** Under the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**, the punishment for contempt may include imprisonment up to six months, a fine of up to ₹2,000, or both.
- **Defenses Available:** Truth is recognized as a valid defense under the law, if made in the public interest and supported with bonafide intentions (introduced through the





Contempt of Courts Amendment Act, 2006).

Recent Developments:

1. In 2023, there was a **growing debate on the need to reform contempt laws** to ensure a balance between protecting judicial independence and safeguarding freedom of expression. Some argue that contempt powers should not be used excessively to stifle criticism.
2. Courts have begun to use **contempt powers cautiously**, especially in light of international norms on freedom of speech, as noted in the **Delhi High Court judgment in 2023** related to media criticism of ongoing cases.



LAC buffer zones may go; no clarity on de-escalation

Demchok is a disputed area where India and China have varying claims in the **Charding La** area. At **Depsang**, Chinese troops have been blocking Indian patrols from going beyond the **Y-junction**

GS Paper II: India-China

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

The breakthrough achieved by India and China towards disengagement in eastern Ladakh comes after two years of stalemate over two remaining friction points, Depsang and Demchok.

Defence sources say patrolling along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in this sector will resume now. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed this, saying the understanding is that “we will be able to do patrolling which we were doing till 2020”.

Resumption of patrolling as it was in 2020 means that the buffer zones set up after disengagement from the friction points will be done away with. However, there is still no clarity on the modalities of the disengagement process. The understanding reached is to restore patrolling as was being done earlier, a source in the know said adding that a frequency would be worked out and done in a coordinated manner to avoid potential face-offs and clashes.

“There are areas which, for various reasons after 2020, they have blocked us, so we had blocked them... We have reached an understanding which will allow the patrolling... Depsang, that is not the on-



Pulling out: Since the Corps commander-level talks in 2020, the two sides have undertaken disengagement from five points. AFP

ly place, there are other places also. The understanding is that we will be able to do patrolling which we were doing till 2020,” Dr. Jaishankar said at an event.

Terming it a positive development, he said the agreement has just been reached and advised “caution”, saying there “will be meetings now to see what are the next steps”.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said the two countries had reached an agreement for patrolling arrangements, leading to disengagement and resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020. However, there is no movement yet on de-escalation of the thousands of troops deployed in eastern Ladakh since the stand-off began.

Demchok is one of the

two mutually agreed disputed areas in eastern Ladakh with each side having varying claims in the Charding La area. China set up tents on the **Indian side of Charding Nala** in 2017 and its presence expanded as the stand-off unfolded in April 2020. China insists that **these two issues predate the 2020 stand-off, while India stresses that the ingress in 2020 has to be revoked**, which had caused a stalemate in the talks.

Patrols blocked

At Depsang plains, Chinese troops have been blocking Indian patrols for some time from going beyond the Y-junction by deliberately facing off due to which the Indian Army has not been able to access the Patrolling Points (PP) 10, 11, 11A, 12 and 13 located on the Limit of Patrolling,

which lies before the LAC. India last accessed the PPs in Depsang in January/February 2020, as reported by *The Hindu* in 2020.

Under agreed protocols, both sides undertake a banner drill when patrols come face to face as a way to prevent their escalation which involves both sides waving banners at each other and asserting their claim and then returning. China has been using this to block Indian patrols. As agreed by both sides during the initial phases of disengagement following the violent clash at Galwan in June 2020, the first step is disengagement from all friction areas, working out new patrolling norms and then de-escalation which is pulling back the thousands of additional troops inducted along the LAC.

Since the Corps commander-level talks in 2020, the two sides have undertaken disengagement from five friction points - from Galwan after the violent clash in June 2020, from the North and South Banks of Pangong Tso in February 2021, from Patrolling Point (PP) 17 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area in August 2021 and PP15 in September 2022.

The last disengagement, from PP15, followed the 16th round of Corps Commander-level talks on July 17, 2022.



LAC buffer zones may go; no clarity on de-escalation (22 October)

Demchok is a disputed area where India and China have varying claims in the Charding La area. At Depsang, Chinese troops have been blocking Indian patrols from going beyond the Y-junction

- India and China achieved a breakthrough towards disengagement in eastern Ladakh after two years of stalemate over two friction points, Depsang and Demchok.
- Defence sources confirmed that patrolling along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in this sector will resume.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated that the understanding allows for patrolling to resume as it was prior to 2020.
- Resuming patrolling means that the buffer zones established after disengagement will be removed.
- There is still no clarity on the specific modalities of the disengagement process.
- The agreement is intended to restore patrolling frequency in a coordinated manner to prevent potential face-offs and clashes.
- Jaishankar noted that both sides had previously blocked each other's patrols, but an understanding now allows for resumed patrolling.
- He referred to the development as positive but advised caution, indicating that further meetings would take place to determine next steps.
- Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced that an agreement for patrolling arrangements has been reached, leading to disengagement and resolution of issues from 2020.
- There is currently no movement on de-escalation of the thousands of troops deployed in eastern Ladakh since the standoff began.
- Demchok is one of two mutually agreed disputed areas in eastern Ladakh, with differing claims from both sides in the Charding La area.
- China set up tents on the Indian side of Charding Nala in 2017, and its presence expanded during the standoff that began in April 2020.
- China claims these issues predate the 2020 standoff, while India insists that the incursions in 2020 must be revoked, contributing to the stalemate in talks.

Patrols blocked

- Chinese troops at Depsang plains have been blocking Indian patrols from accessing the Y-junction, preventing access to Patrolling Points (PP) 10, 11, 11A, 12, and 13, which lie before the LAC.





- India last accessed the PPs in Depsang in January/February 2020, as reported by The Hindu.
- Under agreed protocols, both sides conduct a banner drill when patrols encounter each other to prevent escalation; this involves waving banners and asserting claims before retreating.
- China has been using the banner drill to block Indian patrols.
- The disengagement process began after the violent clash at Galwan in June 2020, with a focus on disengagement from friction areas, establishing new patrolling norms, and then de-escalation by pulling back additional troops.
- Since the Corps commander-level talks in 2020, disengagement has occurred from five friction points:
 - Galwan after the clash in June 2020.
 - North and South Banks of Pangong Tso in February 2021.
 - Patrolling Point (PP) 17 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area in August 2021.
 - Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in September 2022.
- The last disengagement from PP15 followed the 16th round of Corps Commander-level talks on July 17, 2022.



SC dismisses Kejriwal's plea challenging defamation case

GS Paper II: Article
19 (1) (a)

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday cited parity to dismiss a petition filed by former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging a defamation case registered against him for his comments on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's educational qualification.

A Bench headed by Justice Hrishikesh Roy said it had refused to entertain an identical petition filed by Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh, who is Mr. Kejriwal's co-respondent in the defamation case, in August and thus, cannot now take a different approach with the former Chief Minister. "We should be consistent," Justice Roy observed.

The court, however, did not look into the merits of the case and kept all the contentions open for Mr. Kejriwal to raise in the trial



Arvind Kejriwal

court in his favour.

During the hearing, Mr. Kejriwal's counsel, senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, said the defamation complaint did not satisfy the preliminary requirement under Section 199 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. That is, the aggrieved party had not lodged the defamation complaint. It was filed by the Gujarat University Registrar.

Mr. Singhvi said the remarks attributed to him were considered part of the "public discourse". "Otherwise where is Arti-

cle 19(1)(a)," he asked.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the university, said the certificate in question was published on the varsity website. "He is in the habit of making reckless, defamatory statements and then regretting them... He should be either circumspect or stand by them," Mr. Mehta said.

Justice Roy, in a lighter vein, said, "Politicians are more adventurous... Unless they say it in a loud voice and loud manner..."

"But not irresponsibly..." Mr. Mehta intervened.

Mr. Singhvi said his arguments against the defamation case were reasonable and the other party had adopted a "high horse" attitude.

The court made it clear that it was dismissing the petition merely on the fact that it had to take a consistent approach in the case.

SC dismisses Kejriwal's plea challenging defamation case (22 October)





- The Supreme Court dismissed a petition by former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging a defamation case related to his comments on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's educational qualifications.
- A Bench led by Justice Hrishikesh Roy cited parity, noting that a similar petition by Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh had been refused in August.
- Justice Roy emphasized the need for consistency in the court's approach.
- The court did not address the merits of Kejriwal's case and allowed him to raise all contentions in the trial court.
- During the hearing, Kejriwal's counsel, senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, argued that the defamation complaint did not meet the preliminary requirement under Section 199 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, as it was filed by the Gujarat University Registrar rather than the aggrieved party.
- Singhvi asserted that the remarks in question were part of "public discourse" and invoked Article 19(1)(a).
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, representing the university, stated that the certificate was published on the university's website and accused Kejriwal of making reckless, defamatory statements.
- Justice Roy made a light-hearted comment about politicians being adventurous in their statements.
- Mehta emphasized that politicians should be careful with their words.
- Singhvi argued that his defenses against the defamation case were reasonable and criticized the opposing party's attitude.
- The court clarified that the dismissal was based solely on the need for a consistent approach in the case.

Defamation Case

- **Defamation** refers to an act where a person's reputation is harmed by false or malicious statements. In India, defamation is both a **civil** and **criminal offense**.

Types of Defamation:

1. **Civil Defamation:**
 - In civil defamation, a person who feels their reputation has been harmed can file a lawsuit to seek damages under **Tort Law**.
2. **Criminal Defamation:**
 - Criminal defamation is covered under **Section 499** of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860**. A criminal defamation case can lead to imprisonment of up to two years, a fine, or both, under **Section 500**.

Important Aspects of Defamation:



1. Libel and Slander:

- **Libel** refers to defamation in written or published form, while **slander** refers to spoken defamation. In India, no distinction is made between libel and slander; both come under the ambit of defamation.

2. Essential Elements for Defamation:

- **Statement:** The defamatory statement can be verbal, written, or pictorial.
- **Publication:** The statement must be communicated to someone other than the person defamed.
- **Falsity:** The statement must be false. True statements, if they harm someone's reputation, do not amount to defamation.
- **Injury to Reputation:** The statement must harm the reputation of the person.

Legal Provisions for Defamation:

1. **Section 499, IPC:** Defines defamation and the exceptions, such as:
 - **Truth:** If a statement is made in the public interest and is true, it is not considered defamation.
 - **Fair Criticism:** Comments made in the interest of the public, such as criticism of public officials, are not defamatory.
 - **Privileged Communication:** Certain communications, like those made in court or parliament, are protected from defamation charges.
2. **Section 500, IPC:** Specifies the punishment for defamation, which includes imprisonment up to two years, a fine, or both.

Constitutional Context:

- **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Indian Constitution guarantees **freedom of speech and expression**, but this right is subject to reasonable restrictions under **Article 19(2)**, which includes defamation as a ground for imposing limitations.

Important Cases:

1. **Subramanian Swamy vs Union of India (2016):**
 - This case challenged the constitutionality of criminal defamation. The Supreme Court upheld the validity of **Sections 499 and 500 of the IPC**, stating that criminal defamation is a reasonable restriction on the **right to free speech** under **Article 19(2)**.
2. **R. Rajagopal vs State of Tamil Nadu (1994):**
 - Also known as the "**Auto Shankar case**", this case highlighted that individuals have a right to privacy, and media should not publish defamatory content unless the matter pertains to public record.

Recent Developments:

1. **2022 Update on Criminal Defamation:**
 - In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court reinforced the use of **Sections 499 and 500** in cases involving public figures, affirming that false statements against public officials that damage their reputation could lead to legal action.
2. **Politicians and Public Defamation Cases:**



- Several high-profile politicians, such as **Rahul Gandhi** and **Arvind Kejriwal**, have faced defamation charges in recent years. These cases highlight the frequent use of defamation laws in political disputes.
- 3. Press Freedom and Defamation:**
- In 2023, discussions on **decriminalizing defamation** to support press freedom gained momentum. Media organizations argue that criminal defamation stifles investigative journalism and free speech.

Secularism is a core part of the Constitution: SC

GS Paper II: Preamble

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said **secularism is an indelible and core part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.**

The court made the oral observation while hearing a batch of petitions filed by former Rajya Sabha member **Subramanian Swamy** and others challenging the inclusion of the words “socialist” and “secular” in the Preamble to the Constitution.

“This court has in a number of judgments held that secularism was always part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. **If one looks right to equality and**

the word ‘fraternity’ used in the Constitution, there is a clear indication that **secularism has been held as the core feature of the Constitution,**” a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar said.

Justice Khanna disagreed with the argument of the petitioners that the term “socialism” would curtail personal liberty and individualism.

“One should not take the meaning adopted in Western countries... **Socialism can also mean that there should be equality of opportunity and the wealth of the country should be distributed equally,**” Justice Khanna remarked.



Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, a petitioner, said he was not against the words “socialist, secular, and integrity” or their insertion in the Constitution but against the insertion of these words into the Preamble in 1976 and that too with a retrospective effect from November 26, 1949.

The Preamble was

amended in December 1976 by the Indira Gandhi government to introduce the words “socialist” and “secular”. The phrase “unity of the nation” was replaced with “unity and integrity of the nation”. The changes were made in the Preamble through the **42nd Constitution Amendment** during the Emergency.

Originally, the text of the Preamble declared India as a “sovereign, democratic republic”. The words “socialist” and “secular” were inserted between “sovereign” and “democratic”.

The largest Bench in the history of the Supreme Court (13 judges) in the **Ke-savananda Bharati** case

had held that the Preamble was an integral part of the Constitution, and was subject to the amending power of Parliament, provided the Basic Structure was not tinkered with.

Advocate Sriram Parakkat, appearing for CPI leader Binoy Viswam, said the 42nd amendment was indeed “infamous”. It had after all **tried to reduce the power of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.** “While subsequent amendments more or less restored the Constitution to what it was pre-1976, this change was made in the Preamble... that we are secular and socialist... was retained,” Mr. Parakkat submitted.

Secularism is a core part of the Constitution: SC (22 October)

- The Supreme Court stated that secularism is a core part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.
- This observation was made during the hearing of petitions filed by former Rajya Sabha member Subramanian Swamy and others, challenging the inclusion of “socialist” and “secular” in the Preamble.
- Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar noted that past judgments have affirmed that secularism is a fundamental feature of the Constitution.
- Justice Khanna disagreed with the petitioners’ claim that the term “socialism” would limit personal liberty and individualism.
- He emphasized that socialism can also mean equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth.





- Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, one of the petitioners, stated he does not oppose the terms but objected to their insertion into the Preamble in 1976 with retrospective effect from November 26, 1949.
- The Preamble was amended in December 1976 by the Indira Gandhi government to include “socialist” and “secular” and to replace “unity of the nation” with “unity and integrity of the nation.”
- These changes were made through the 42nd Constitution Amendment during the Emergency.
- The original Preamble described India as a “sovereign, democratic republic,” with the new words inserted between “sovereign” and “democratic.”
- The Kesavananda Bharati case, involving the largest Bench in Supreme Court history (13 judges), established that the Preamble is integral to the Constitution and can be amended, provided the Basic Structure is not altered.
- Advocate Sriram Parakkat, representing CPI leader Binoy Viswam, referred to the 42nd Amendment as “infamous” for attempting to reduce the power of the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- He noted that while subsequent amendments restored much of the Constitution's pre-1976 form, the changes affirming secularism and socialism in the Preamble were retained.

EC approves Ajay Kumar Singh as new Jharkhand DGP

The Election Commission of India on Monday approved the appointment of Ajay Kumar Singh as the Jharkhand Director-General of Police (DGP). Mr. Singh, a 1989-batch officer of the Indian Police Service, is the senior-most officer in the cadre. He was selected from the panel of three IPS officers sent by the State government after the EC had ordered immediate removal of Acting DGP Anurag Gupta on October 19, sources said.

EC approves Ajay Kumar Singh as new Jharkhand DGP (22 October)





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- Ajay Kumar Singh is a 1989-batch officer of the Indian Police Service and is the senior-most officer in the cadre.
- He was selected from a panel of three IPS officers submitted by the State government.
- This decision followed the Election Commission's order for the immediate removal of Acting DGP Anurag Gupta on October 19.

PATRIOTIC IAS



SC to hear in January pleas against blocking BBC film

As Centre fails to file a counter, Justice Khanna gives it three weeks to file one; petitions say the right to lawfully circulate the documentary is part of freedom of speech and expression

GS Paper II: Article 19 (1) (a)

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday posted petitions challenging the Union government's decision to block the screening of a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) documentary series titled *India: The Modi Question* to the second week of January 2025.

A Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna had issued formal notice to the Union of India through the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, Twitter Communications India Private Ltd., and Google India Private Ltd. on February 3, 2023. The court had listed the case in April then.

However, on Monday, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the government, said he had "just realised" that the Centre was yet to file its counter to the petitions filed by senior journalist N. Ram, Mahua Moitra, MP, and advocate Prashant Bhushan.

The petitions had highlighted the citizens' "fundamental right to view, form an informed opinion,



critique, report on and lawfully circulate the contents of the documentary as right to freedom of speech and expression incorporates the right to receive and disseminate information".

Government's lapse

Appearing for the petitioners, senior advocate C.U. Singh strongly objected to the government's lapse in filing its counter even as Mr. Mehta sought more time to file its response.

Mr. Singh said the court need not wait for the government reply as the case concerned a "take-down" order against the documentary.

Justice Khanna said the court wanted the benefit of the government's response

and gave the Centre three weeks to file its counter and two weeks for the petitioners to file their rejoinder, if any.

"The timelines must be adhered [by the parties]," Justice Khanna said. The documentary is believed to be critical of the role of then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi in the 2002 riots.

In the hearing in February 2023, Mr. Singh cited instances "where officials more loyal than the king" blocked screening on university campuses and even rusticated students for watching the film.

The students of Rajasthan Central University in Ajmer were suspended for watching the film. The Jawaharlal Nehru University

administration had issued an advisory to cancel a screening to maintain "peace and harmony" on the campus.

The petitioners referred to reports about detention of students and presence of riot police on the Jamia Milia Islamia campus in Delhi.

The petition filed by Mr. Ram and others argue that the Ministry, under Rule 16 (3) of the Information Technology Rules, 2021 and Section 69(A) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, had sent a legal request to Twitter India to block 50 tweets concerning and even containing links to the documentary.

The tweets of Mr. Bhushan and Ms. Moitra were among those taken down. YouTube links of the video were blocked, the petition had said.

"The contents of the BBC documentary and tweets of Moitra and Bhushan are protected under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The content of the documentary series do not fall under any restriction on free speech or restrictions imposed under Section 69A of the IT Act," the petition said.

SC to hear in January pleas against blocking BBC film (22 October)



As Centre fails to file a counter, Justice Khanna gives it three weeks to file one; petitions say the right to lawfully circulate the documentary is part of right to freedom of speech and expression

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- A Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna issued formal notice to the Union of India through the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, Twitter Communications India Private Ltd., and Google India Private Ltd. on February 3, 2023.
- The court had initially listed the case for April 2023.
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, representing the government, stated that the Centre had not yet filed its counter to the petitions.
- The petitions were filed by senior journalist N. Ram, MP Mahua Moitra, and advocate Prashant Bhushan.
- The petitions emphasized citizens' fundamental right to view and critique the documentary as part of freedom of speech and expression.
- Senior advocate C.U. Singh objected to the government's delay in filing its counter, arguing that the court should not wait for the government's response due to the urgency of the "take-down" order.
- Justice Khanna insisted on the importance of having the government's response and gave the Centre three weeks to file its counter and two weeks for petitioners to respond.
- The documentary is believed to be critical of then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi's role in the 2002 riots.
- During the February 2023 hearing, Mr. Singh cited instances of officials blocking screenings on university campuses and punishing students for viewing the film.
- Students at Rajasthan Central University in Ajmer were suspended for watching the film, and the Jawaharlal Nehru University administration canceled a screening for maintaining "peace and harmony."
- The petitioners referenced reports of student detentions and riot police presence at Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi.
- The petition argued that the Ministry had sent a legal request under Rule 16(3) of the IT Rules, 2021, and Section 69(A) of the IT Act, 2000, to block 50 tweets about the documentary.
- Tweets from Mr. Bhushan and Ms. Moitra were among those taken down, along with YouTube links to the documentary.
- The petition stated that the content of the BBC documentary and the tweets were protected under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.
- It argued that the documentary's content does not fall under any free speech restrictions or limitations imposed under Section 69A of the IT Act.



In a first, Wikipedia takes down article globally after Delhi HC order

GS Paper II: Contempt of Court

Aroon Deep

NEW DELHI

Wikipedia has taken down an article titled “Asian News International vs. Wikimedia Foundation”, the entry on the ANI news agency’s defamation lawsuit against the online encyclopedia’s parent foundation. This is the first instance of an English Wikipedia article being taken down by the foundation in the encyclopedia’s history.

The takedown follows an order by the Delhi High Court in which Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela ruled that the Wikipedia page describing criticism of the lawsuit “amounts to interference in Court proceedings” and violated the “sub judice principle”.

A Wikimedia spokesperson declined to comment. Takedown or alteration requests have been complied



Takedown or alteration requests have been complied with only in fewer than half-a-dozen instances in Wikipedia’s history. FILE PHOTO

with only in fewer than half-a-dozen instances in Wikipedia’s history, after requests from Germany, France and Ukraine, as per transparency reports published by the foundation since 2012.

It is unclear whether in these instances individual pages were completely removed or only specific pieces of content were lifted. The Division Bench of the court said the charac-

terisation of a previous ruling in the case as a threat to the “flow of information and knowledge” was prejudicial to the proceedings. This line was edited out of the article in its most recent state.

The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 does not prohibit the coverage of court proceedings. However, it only provides for exemption for criticism of a court order after a case has “been

heard and finally decided”.

The Wikipedia page on ANI remains available, and much of the information on the page dedicated to the court case is available as a section in this article.

The news agency is suing the foundation for a description that currently says that the agency “has been accused of spreading pro-government propaganda, anti-opposition disinformation, engaging in partisan campaigning for the BJP, and using a vast network of fake news websites to push disinformation”.

“I think nothing can be worse for a news agency than to be called a puppet of an intelligence agency, stooge of the government,” Justice Manmohan said on Monday. “If that is true, the credibility goes.”

ANI is seeking the page’s editing, and ₹2 crore in damages.

In a first, Wikipedia takes down article globally after Delhi HC order (22 October)

- Wikipedia has removed the article titled “Asian News International vs. Wikimedia Foundation,” related to ANI’s defamation lawsuit against Wikimedia Foundation.
- This marks the first instance of an English Wikipedia article being taken down by the foundation in its history.
- The takedown follows a Delhi High Court order where Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela ruled that the Wikipedia page interfered with court proceedings and violated the “sub judice principle.”
- A spokesperson for Wikimedia declined to comment on the takedown.





- There have been fewer than six instances in Wikipedia's history where takedown or alteration requests have been complied with, following requests from Germany, France, and Ukraine, according to transparency reports since 2012.
- It is unclear if those instances involved complete page removals or just specific content edits.
- The Division Bench of the court stated that characterizing a previous ruling as a threat to the “flow of information and knowledge” was prejudicial to the proceedings, leading to the removal of that line from the article.
- The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 does not prohibit coverage of court proceedings but allows criticism of court orders only after cases have been “heard and finally decided.”
- The Wikipedia page on ANI remains available, and much information about the court case is included in a section of this article.
- ANI is suing Wikimedia for a description stating that the agency “has been accused of spreading pro-government propaganda, anti-opposition disinformation, engaging in partisan campaigning for the BJP, and using a vast network of fake news websites.”
- Justice Manmohan remarked that being labeled a "puppet of an intelligence agency" or a "stooge of the government" severely impacts credibility.
- ANI is seeking edits to the page and ₹2 crore in damages.



exhibition area open to the public.

Whether the participation and pressure can push countries towards bolder conservation actions remains to be seen.

The clearest sign of lagging efforts is the fact that most countries have yet to submit national conservation plans, known officially as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), though they had agreed to do so by the start of COP16.

As of October 18, 31 out of 195 countries had filed a plan with the U.N. biodiversity secretariat.

Richer nations have been quicker to file, including many European nations, Australia, Japan, China, South Korea, and Canada. The United States attends the talks but has never ratified the Convention on Biodiversity, so is not obligated to submit a plan.

Another 73 countries as of October 18 had opted to only file a less ambitious submission that sets out their national targets without details of how they would be achieved.

With so few plans filed, experts will likely struggle to gauge progress in meeting the agreement's hallmark "30 by 30" goal of preserving 30% of the land and sea by 2030.

Colombia's Environment Minister Susana Muhamad, who also serves as COP16's president, said the summit must also address why so many others are late. "It could be that the funds are not enough, for example, to be able to produce the plans," she said.

Poorer countries have had a harder time finding the funding and expertise needed to develop national biodiversity plans, World Wide Fund for Nature advocacy chief Bernadette Fischler Hooper said.

Telegram Channel: <https://t.me/patrioticias>

World lags on 2030 nature goals as COP16 talks begin

GS Paper III: Environment

The world in 2022 reached its most ambitious deal ever to halt the destruction of nature by decade's end.

Two years later, countries are already behind on meeting their goals.

As nearly 200 nations meet on Monday for a two-week U.N. biodiversity summit, COP16, in Cali, Colombia, they will be under pressure to prove their support for the goals laid out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework agreement.

A top concern for countries and companies is how to pay for conservation, with the COP16 talks aiming to develop new initiatives that could generate revenues for nature.

"We have a problem here," said Gavin Edwards, director of the nonprofit Nature Positive. "COP16 is an opportunity to re-energise and remind everybody of their commitments two years ago and start to course correct if we're going to get anywhere close to 2030 targets being achieved."

The rate of nature destruction through activities like logging or overfishing has not let up, while governments miss deadlines on their biodiversity action plans and funding for conservation is billions of dollars away from meeting a 2025 goal.

The summit in Colombia, marking the 16th meeting of nations that signed the original 1992 Convention on Biodiversity, is set to be the largest biodiversity summit to date, with some 23,000 delegates registered to participate as well as a large





PATRIOTIC IAS: Near Rajbanshi Hospital, Paidleyganj Road, Gorakhpur 9971932488

PATRIOTIC IAS

Website: patrioticias.in
Telegram Channel: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>



Black holes in Webb data allay threat to cosmology's standard model

Using data from the Webb telescope, studies found the universe should have had massive galaxies sooner than believed. Their conclusion undermined the standard model of cosmology, which attempts to explain the universe's origins. But a new study may have saved the model

GS Paper III: S&T

Shreejaya Karantha

Since NASA launched the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) almost three years ago, astronomers have been actively searching for clues about how galaxies grew in the early universe. This universe was a dark place: there is no light from this period to tell us how the first stars and galaxies formed, yet uncovering these processes could help answer key questions like the role of dark matter in the early universe.

So when astronomers recently pored through JWST, they were surprised to find monstrous structures when the universe was only a few hundred million years old, instead of infant galaxies.

The universe began with a Big Bang about 13.8 billion years ago as a hot, dense mixture of gases and subatomic particles. Over time, the universe expanded and cooled, allowing the particles to separate from the mixture and become independent clumps of matter. The gradual and continuous cooling of the universe eventually created larger structures such as stars, galaxies, and galaxy clusters.

According to the standard model of cosmology, which attempts to explain the universe's origins and evolution, the first stars formed around 100-200 million years after the Big Bang and the first galaxies within the first billion years.

But JWST was revealing massive, fully-developed galaxies, that too in greater numbers than expected, only around 400-650 million years after the Big Bang. This mismatch became a source of intrigue among researchers, who had to figure out what was wrong with their standard model.

Now, a study published on August 26 in the *Astrophysical Journal* by an international team led by Katherine Chworowsky and Steven Finkelstein at the University of Texas at Austin offers a promising explanation.

Deep into the universe

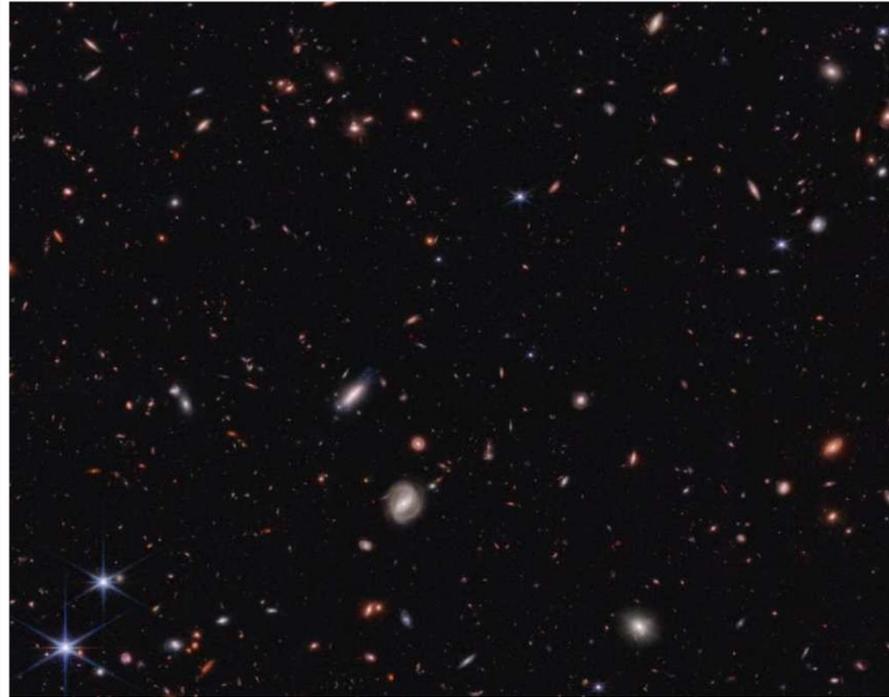
Distant galaxies are faint, and detecting them requires advanced telescopes. Prerana Biswas, a postdoctoral researcher at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, explained. (She wasn't involved in the new study.)

This means, first, a telescope with a large primary mirror. The Hubble Space Telescope has a 2.4-m-wide primary mirror, while JWST's mirror is 6.5 m wide. Second, the telescope will have to be very sensitive, which relates to its ability to record data at different wavelengths. The Hubble operates in the optical, ultraviolet, and some infrared wavelengths, while JWST is specifically designed for infrared observations with a focus on studying the early universe. This is because visible and ultraviolet light from distant galaxies shifts to the infrared wavelengths as the universe expands.

In the new study, researchers analysed data from the JWST's Cosmic Evolution Early Release Science (CEERS) Survey, which Finkelstein leads. They focused on galaxies that existed when the universe was 650-1,500 million years old.

According to the team, one possible explanation for a larger number of massive galaxies in the early universe is that these galaxies manufactured stars more efficiently than the galaxies of today.

Biman Nath, a professor of astronomy



A small portion of the field observed by the James Webb Space Telescope filled with galaxies. The light from some of them has travelled for over 13 billion years to reach the telescope. JWST/NASA

and astrophysics at the Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru, said the higher efficiency of star formation "wouldn't affect the large-scale structure" of the universe "because the bulk of these large-scale structures is produced by dark matter, so what happens to a tiny fraction of normal matter (whether or not they produce stars at a faster rate) wouldn't affect it."

He added that the specifics of whether the modified efficiency contradicts the current understanding of galaxy formation need to be worked out. Biswas agreed, saying that if this value is found to have been higher in the early universe, existing models of galaxy growth and evolution may need to be reworked.

A secret ingredient

The researchers also examined the black holes at the centres of these ancient galaxies. These objects are also called "little red dots" because of what the light from their direction looks like. These black holes rapidly consume the galaxies' gas, causing the latter to emit heat and light.

"The fact that massive black holes contribute to the total light emitted by their host galaxies has been known for some time, and there has been research and work done to disentangle light coming from black holes from the light coming from stars to accurately measure" the masses of stars in galaxies, Chworowsky said.

"However, before JWST, we had not seen galaxies that looked specifically like little red dots, therefore it was not known that they often hosted black holes until they had been independently studied," she added.



However, before JWST, we had not seen galaxies that looked specifically like little red dots, therefore it was not known that they often hosted black holes until they had been independently studied

In other words, the star mass of galaxies may have been overstated in previous studies thanks to the additional light emitted by their black holes. When the researchers in the new study removed these little red dots from their data for analysis, they found that the galaxies weren't as massive as previously estimated, thus sparing the standard model of cosmology from revision.

The bottom line

The researchers wrote in their paper that the standard model could explain more efficient star formation in the early universe in the form of the extreme physical conditions and abundant gas. Catastrophic events like supernovae and stellar winds were also less effective at disrupting star formation.

"The standard model of cosmology remains the most successful framework for describing our universe," Biswas said. "There are only a handful of studies that contradict this model. It is not surprising that JWST observations align with its predictions. It would be far more surprising if these observations challenged this model."

Previous JWST observations of massive, well-developed galaxies in the early universe had questioned the standard

model, including the universe's age, the timeline for the formation of the first galaxies, and galaxy formation theories. For example, a recent study used JWST data to say spiral galaxies could have emerged in the universe within 1.5 billion years, much earlier than previously expected. As evidence, the researchers pointed to an exceptional star formation rate and larger galaxy sizes – but these conclusions could be overturned now. The authors of this study declined to comment.

Nath, who wasn't involved with the new study, added that the problem of observations not matching the standard model's predictions "become acute when the JWST observations of even earlier galaxies are considered, going back to when the universe was around 400 million years old."

Chworowsky said the team is working on including more data from JWST in addition to CEERS. "This will give us the ability both to push this analysis to higher redshifts and higher masses, as those galaxies are rarer and we're more likely to be able to find them in larger sets of data."

Expanding the data set will help researchers get a better sense of the current results and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the formation of massive galaxies in the early universe.

"I am happy to see that astronomers are working towards these problems," Nath said. "Maybe it is possible, after all, to find some explanation within the current models."

(Shreejaya Karantha is a freelance science writer and a content writer and research specialist at The Secrets of The Universe.shreejayakarant@gmail.com)

Black holes in Webb data allay threat to cosmology's standard model (22 October)

Using data from the Webb telescope, studies found the universe should have had massive galaxies sooner than believed. Their conclusion undermined the standard model of cosmology, which attempts to explain the universe's origins. But a new study may have saved the model

- NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has been used to search for clues about galaxy formation in the early universe for nearly three years.
- The early universe was dark, lacking light to reveal how the first stars and galaxies formed, making it challenging to study processes related to dark matter.
- Astronomers were surprised to find massive structures, rather than infant galaxies, just a few hundred million years after the Big Bang.
- The universe began with a Big Bang approximately 13.8 billion years ago, starting as a hot, dense mixture of gases and subatomic particles.
- Over time, the universe expanded and cooled, leading to the formation of larger structures such as stars, galaxies, and clusters.
- According to the standard cosmological model, the first stars formed around 100-200 million years post-Big Bang, with galaxies appearing within the first billion years.
- JWST revealed fully-developed galaxies in greater numbers than expected, existing around 400-650 million years after the Big Bang, prompting researchers to reevaluate the standard model.
- A study published on August 26 in the Astrophysical Journal by an international team led by Katherine Chworowsky and Steven Finkelstein offers a promising explanation for this observation.
- Detecting distant galaxies requires advanced telescopes like JWST, which has a larger primary mirror (6.5 m) compared to Hubble's (2.4 m) and is specifically designed for infrared observations.
- As the universe expands, visible and ultraviolet light from distant galaxies shifts to infrared wavelengths, making JWST essential for studying the early universe.
- The study focused on galaxies from when the universe was 650–1,500 million years old, analyzing data from JWST's Cosmic Evolution Early Release Science (CEERS) Survey.
- One explanation for the large number of massive early galaxies is that they formed stars more efficiently than today's galaxies.





- Biman Nath noted that this increased efficiency would not affect the large-scale structure of the universe, primarily governed by dark matter.
- Further investigation is needed to determine if this modified efficiency contradicts current galaxy formation models.
- Researchers also examined black holes in ancient galaxies, which contribute to the total light emitted by these galaxies.
- "Little red dots" refer to black holes observed in galaxies, which had not been identified before JWST.
- Previous studies may have overestimated the star mass of galaxies due to additional light from black holes.
- When accounting for black holes, the galaxies were found to be less massive than previously estimated, alleviating the need to revise the standard model of cosmology.
- The researchers indicated that the standard model could explain efficient star formation under extreme early universe conditions, where disruptive events were less effective.
- The standard model of cosmology remains successful, with only a few studies contradicting it.
- Previous JWST observations had raised questions about the universe's age and the timeline for galaxy formation, suggesting that spiral galaxies might have emerged earlier than expected.
- Nath emphasized that discrepancies between observations and the standard model become more pronounced with observations of galaxies from around 400 million years old.
- Chworowsky mentioned plans to include more JWST data, enhancing analysis of higher redshifts and rarer galaxies.
- Expanding the dataset will improve understanding of the formation of massive galaxies in the early universe.
- Nath expressed optimism about ongoing astronomical research that may provide explanations within current models.

Red Giant

- A **Red Giant** is a stage in the life cycle of a star, particularly a low or medium-mass star like our Sun.
- After a star exhausts the hydrogen fuel in its core, nuclear fusion slows down, and the star begins to expand significantly, becoming much larger and cooler.
- This expanded, cooler phase is called the **Red Giant** phase.

Formation of a Red Giant:

1. **Hydrogen Burning Phase:** Initially, stars convert hydrogen into helium via nuclear fusion in their core. This process produces energy that balances the gravitational forces trying to collapse the star.
2. **Exhaustion of Hydrogen:** Over time, the hydrogen in the core is depleted. Without hydrogen to fuse, the core begins to contract under gravity, while the outer layers expand.



3. **Helium Fusion:** In the contracting core, the temperature rises, leading to helium fusion (also known as the **Helium Flash**). This fusion creates carbon and oxygen in the core.
4. **Expansion and Cooling:** As the outer layers expand, the star's surface cools, giving it a reddish hue. The star swells to many times its original size, entering the **Red Giant phase**.

Key Features of Red Giants:

- **Size:** Red Giants can grow to a size **100-1000 times larger** than the Sun.
- **Temperature:** While they are larger, their surface temperature is lower, ranging between **3000-4000 Kelvin**.
- **Luminosity:** Despite the cooler temperature, Red Giants are incredibly bright because of their massive size, which compensates for the cooler surface temperature.

Life After the Red Giant Stage:

- For stars like the Sun, once they reach the Red Giant phase, they eventually shed their outer layers, creating a **planetary nebula**.
- What remains is the core, which becomes a **White Dwarf**—a dense, hot remnant of the star.
- Massive stars, on the other hand, may explode as supernovae, leading to **neutron stars** or **black holes**.

Examples of Red Giants:

- **Betelgeuse** in the constellation **Orion** is one of the most famous Red Giants.
- **Aldebaran**, located in the constellation **Taurus**, is another well-known Red Giant star visible from Earth.

Importance in Astronomy:

- **Understanding Stellar Evolution:** Red Giants play a critical role in helping astronomers understand how stars evolve and the processes behind nuclear fusion.
- **Heavy Element Formation:** In the core of Red Giants, elements heavier than helium, such as carbon and oxygen, are formed, which are essential for the formation of planets and life.

Recent Updates and Observations:

1. **Betelgeuse Dimming:** In late 2019 and early 2020, Betelgeuse experienced significant dimming, leading astronomers to closely monitor it, as it is expected to explode as a supernova in the distant future.
2. **Helium Burning Phase Observations:** Recent studies using space telescopes, such as the **Hubble Space Telescope**, have provided more insights into how helium burning and mass loss occur during the Red Giant phase.

Government Support for Space and Research:

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, through missions such as **Astrosat**, contributes significantly to the study of stars and their various life phases, including Red Giants.
- **Government of India** supports space research through collaborations with institutions like **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)** and international bodies like **NASA** and **ESA**.

Why do the outer layers expand in a Red Giant?

1. Core Contraction and Energy Redistribution:



- When a star depletes the hydrogen in its core, nuclear fusion of hydrogen into helium no longer produces enough pressure to counteract gravity. As a result, the core starts to contract under its own gravitational pull.
- **Core contraction** causes the core's temperature to rise significantly. This leads to helium fusion (also called the **Helium Flash**) and initiates the fusion of hydrogen in a shell around the core.

2. Hydrogen Shell Burning and Energy Output:

- As the core contracts and heats up, the layer of hydrogen around the core becomes hot enough to undergo **shell burning**. In this phase, hydrogen fusion takes place in a shell surrounding the helium core.
- The **hydrogen shell burning** releases an enormous amount of energy, much more than during the star's earlier main-sequence phase.
- The energy from this intense fusion is transported outward, which causes the outer layers of the star to expand dramatically.

3. Expansion Due to Pressure: (This area is vague)

- The star's outer layers are loosely bound to the core compared to earlier stages. As the core contracts and heats, the increased pressure from the fusion processes forces the star's outer envelope to expand.
- This is akin to an inflation process. As the core gets smaller and hotter, the outer layers swell, increasing the radius of the star by hundreds or even thousands of times. This leads to the Red Giant phase.

4. Cooling and the Reddish Hue:

- As the outer layers of the star expand, they move away from the core and thus cool down. This cooling causes the star to emit light in the red part of the spectrum, giving it the characteristic reddish hue of a Red Giant.

Raman Effect

- The **Raman Effect** is a phenomenon in light scattering discovered by **Sir C.V. Raman**, an Indian physicist, in 1928. Raman was the first Indian to win the **Nobel Prize in Physics** in 1930 for this groundbreaking discovery.
- The discovery came from his experiments on the scattering of light, where he noticed a change in the wavelength when light passed through a transparent material. This effect provided critical evidence for the quantum theory of light.

What is the Raman Effect?

- The Raman Effect refers to the scattering of light when it passes through a medium (liquid, solid, or gas).
- Most of the light that interacts with a medium passes through it without changing its energy.
- However, a small portion of the light gets scattered in different directions, and this scattered light has a different energy (or wavelength) compared to the original light.

This shift in the wavelength of scattered light is the **Raman Effect**.



- **Elastic Scattering** (Rayleigh Scattering): Most of the light has the same wavelength as the incident light.
- **Inelastic Scattering** (Raman Scattering): A small portion of light has a different wavelength, which corresponds to the **Raman Shift**.

Key Concepts:

- **Stokes and Anti-Stokes Lines:** In Raman scattering, if the scattered light has a lower energy than the incident light, it's called a **Stokes Shift**. If it has a higher energy, it's called an **Anti-Stokes Shift**.
- **Raman Spectroscopy:** This phenomenon forms the basis of **Raman Spectroscopy**, a powerful analytical technique used in chemistry and material science to identify molecules and study their structure.

Significance of the Raman Effect:

1. **Quantum Theory Validation:** The discovery of the Raman Effect was crucial in validating **quantum theory**, specifically the interaction of light with matter.
2. **Applications in Science:** The Raman Effect is widely used in various fields:
 - **Chemistry:** To study molecular vibrations, and hence, molecular composition.
 - **Material Science:** To investigate the properties of solids.
 - **Biology:** For detecting biological markers.
 - **Pharmaceutical Industry:** To identify chemical compounds and monitor drug quality.

Recent Updates and Advancements:

- **Advancements in Raman Spectroscopy:** In recent years, Raman spectroscopy has seen advancements with the integration of **Laser Technology** and **nanotechnology**, leading to high-resolution instruments like **Surface-enhanced Raman Spectroscopy (SERS)**, which allows for the detection of even single molecules.
- **Raman Research in India:** Indian institutions such as the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** and **Raman Research Institute** (founded by C.V. Raman himself) continue to explore applications of the Raman Effect, particularly in **nanophotonics** and **biophotonics**.

Government Recognition:

1. **National Science Day:** India celebrates **National Science Day** every year on **February 28** to honor the discovery of the Raman Effect.
2. **Education and Research:** Institutions such as **IGNOU** and **NCERT** include the study of the Raman Effect in their science curriculum to inspire young minds about Indian contributions to science.

Important Data and Facts:

- **Date of Discovery:** February 28, 1928.



- **Nobel Prize:** Sir C.V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.
- **Raman Shift:** The change in the wavelength of scattered light is typically very small, and the phenomenon is observed using highly sensitive instruments.

An approaching milestone in constitutional governance

GS Paper II: Key Features of Indian Constitution

November 26 this year will mark the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India. It is a milestone that needs to be celebrated by every stakeholder of Indian democracy. Constitutional governance in India is not merely a facet of the laws, rules and regulations that govern the establishment and the evolution of democratic institutions. It is also about permeating a deep sense of constitutional culture that has captured the collective consciousness of Indians across different cultures, faiths and beliefs.

Respect for institutions, power transition

As we move towards celebrating this Constitution Day, it is an opportune time to identify the core constitutional values that have shaped the constitutional culture of India. These five values have also withstood the test of time.

First, people's respect for democratic institutions. The Constitution of India was adopted on November 26, 1949, a time when life expectancy in India was around 32 years. Today, it has progressed to around 70 years. This extraordinary improvement in the standards of living and the quality of life has contributed in a significant manner for the ordinary Indian to respect the role and the contribution of democratic institutions. The social and economic development of India is an example of the progressive implementation of public policy over the last several decades. There is a need for a nuanced understanding on why Indians continue to participate in such large and significant numbers in every election – local, State or national – notwithstanding the fact that they expect a better performance from their representatives. Since the first elections in 1951-52, we have consistently witnessed nearly 60% of Indians participating in elections including in the 2024 general election where there was a 65.79% voter turnout. The respect for democracy and faith in democratic institutions in India is a core constitutional value that has withstood the test of time.

Second, the smooth transition of elected governments. The seven decades have seen numerous elections across States and at the national level. India has seen elected representatives representing different political parties, with varying degrees of strength and presence, within a State and/or at a pan-India level. We have also seen political leaders of different ideological persuasions winning elections and holding positions of power and responsibility in the States and at the Centre. But if there is one thing that is unique and distinctive about India's democratic traditions, it is the deep commitment every political party attaches to the



C. Raj Kumar

the Vice Chancellor of
O.P. Jindal Global
University

idea of smooth transitions of power at the end of elections. While elections are fought with high-voltage campaigns and at times, even divisive narratives, the electoral results are almost always a humbling experience – it is the people of India who win each election without any exception. The Indian electorate has, time and again, demonstrated to the world that its understanding of problems and challenges will shape our decisions relating to elections. The people of India have imbibed this core constitutional value of participating in elections and enabling the smooth transition of power from one government to the other.

Upholding rights

Third, protection of rights and freedoms through courts. The Constitution is very forthright in recognising the highest degree of importance being attached to the fundamental rights and the courts, which are institutions created under the Constitution to protect the rights of people. It is even more remarkable that the framers of the Constitution were people associated with the freedom movement and responsible for building the foundations of the Indian Republic. They struggled to fight against colonialism to help achieve India's freedom. While drafting the provisions relating to fundamental rights, the members of the Constituent Assembly were mindful of the power of the mighty state and its instrumentalities. They could have tilted towards the idea of a benevolent state, especially when almost the entire first Cabinet had people who were part of the freedom movement. However, their deep scepticism of the state apparatus and the fervent commitment towards protecting individual rights and freedoms reflected a far-sighted vision on their part. This vision of recognising the role of the state, while being conscious of the fact that rights and freedoms are paramount, is a core constitutional value that has only been strengthened over the years.

Fourth, federalism as a facet of constitutional governance. The framers of the Constitution were mindful of the extraordinary diversity of the country, including its linguistic diversity and other forms of pluralism deeply embedded in our civic and political culture. The history and the tradition of every State of India also meant that they were conscious of protecting the unique identity, tradition and culture of the States and the people while forging a collective national identity. They created different forms of autonomy and special privileges for different States keeping in mind their unique histories and cultures. To efficaciously ameliorate the disparities that are prevalent among the people in certain regions of the nation, the Indian Constitution delineates a paradigm of special

dispensations, furthering the agenda of equity and inclusivity.

Over the last seven decades, the idea of federalism has further deepened at least at two levels: first, the rise of State-level political parties across India and their own contribution to the development of national political consciousness. This has, on several occasions, led to strong State parties contributing to the development of coalition governments in the States and at the Centre. Second, the idea of federalism has also led to the passing of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which led to the establishment of panchayati raj institutions and nagarpalikas.

The part played by media, civil society

Fifth, the role of the media and civil society in instilling faith in democracy. Much has been said and written about the Indian media. The Indian media is a diverse and heterogeneous institution with views and perspectives that are generated across India in different languages. Further, the transition of print media to broadcast and further innovations in media and technology have democratised access to information and indeed the role of media. While there are fundamental challenges relating to the economic model of governance of media institutions, it is fair to say that media and civil society have contributed to the instilling of faith in Indian democracy. While we need to be critical of the challenges of the autonomy and the independence of media, it is equally important to recognise the values of transparency that have been part of the media culture. In the cacophony of an information explosion through various forms of media and the medium of communication, the Indian electorate has been enlightened to develop an informed degree of understanding of the role of the media and civil society.

We have every reason to celebrate 75 years of constitutional governance.

After Independence, the last British commander in chief of the Indian Army, General Claude Auchinleck had observed, "The Sikhs may try to set up a separate regime. I think they probably will and that will be only a start of a general decentralization and break-up of the idea that India is a country, whereas it is a subcontinent as varied as Europe. The Punjabi is as different from a Madrassi as a Scot is from an Italian. The British tried to consolidate it but achieved nothing permanent. No one can make a nation out of a continent of many nations."

We proved many people wrong in not only forging a national identity of a nation that is built on constitutional ideals but we have also made the Constitution an instrument of galvanising social conscience and political consciousness.

India has every reason to celebrate 75 years of constitutional governance





The case for a nature restoration law in India

GS Paper III: Environment

The degradation of natural ecosystems is an urgent global issue, and India, with its vast geographical and ecological diversity, is no exception. With almost 30% of its total geographical area having land degradation, the need for India to adopt a comprehensive nature restoration law is more acute. The Nature Restoration Law (NRL), which was enacted by the European Union (EU), is an inspiring model from which India can draw points to tackle its growing environmental crises.

The NRL, adopted by the EU's Environmental Council on June 17, 2024, is a groundbreaking piece of legislation that aims to restore the health of Europe's ecosystems.

The regulation was endorsed by a majority of EU member-states, representing 66.07% of the EU population, marking a milestone in global environmental governance. The law mandates that at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas must be restored by 2030, with the goal of having all ecosystems in need of restoration fully restored by 2050.

The NRL is part of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the European Green Deal, and it seeks to reverse the alarming trend of biodiversity loss as over 80% of Europe's habitats are in poor condition. It focuses on a broad range of ecosystems, from forests and agricultural lands to rivers and urban spaces, implementing specific measures such as the restoration of 25,000 kilometres of rivers into free-flowing rivers and the planting of three billion additional trees by 2030.

The environmental, economic case for India

India is grappling with similar, if not more severe, environmental challenges. According to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas, nearly 97.85 million hectares (29.7%) of India's total geographical area underwent land



Tuhin A. Sinha

National Spokesperson, Bharatiya Janata Party



Kaviraj Singh

Founder and Managing Director, Earthhood

degradation in 2018-19, a sharp increase from 94.53 million hectares in 2003-05.

Desertification, in particular, is a growing concern, with 83.69 million hectares affected in 2018-19. The report highlights that land degradation is prevalent in key States such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, which together form 23.79% of India's desertified land area.

India has already made considerable strides in addressing these issues through the successful implementation of the Green India Mission, the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (which is the second-largest watershed programme in the world) and the National Afforestation Programme. However, the scale of the problem demands a more comprehensive approach. Just as the EU's NRL sets legally binding targets for ecosystem restoration, India needs such a nature restoration law that mandates the restoration of its degraded landscapes, ensuring the long-term sustainability of its ecosystems.

What a law in India could look like

A Nature Restoration Law in India, inspired by the EU's model, could include the following.

First in the list is restoration targets. India should aim to restore 20% of its degraded land by 2030, with a goal of restoring all ecosystems by 2050. This includes forests, wetlands, rivers, agricultural lands, and urban green spaces.

Second is wetland restoration. While peatlands are less common in India, critical wetlands such as the Sundarbans and Chilika Lake support biodiversity and carbon sequestration. A law could target restoring 30% of degraded wetlands by 2030.

Third is biodiversity in agriculture. Agriculture dominates India's landscape. Promoting agroforestry and sustainable practices could

restore farmlands. Indicators such as the butterfly or bird index used in the EU, could track progress.

Fourth is river restoration. India could focus on restoring free-flowing rivers, beginning with major rivers such as the Ganga and Yamuna, addressing pollution and obstructions.

Fifth is urban green spaces. To combat urban degradation, India should ensure no net loss of green spaces, promoting urban forests in cities such as Bengaluru and Delhi, which face heat islands and declining air quality.

Economic and social benefits of restoration

The benefits of such a law would extend beyond environmental restoration. According to the World Economic Forum, nature restoration could globally generate economic returns of up to \$10 trillion annually by 2030. In India, restoring degraded lands would enhance agricultural productivity, improve water security, and create millions of jobs, particularly in rural areas. The law could also help India meet its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 15, which calls for the sustainable management of forests and combating desertification.

Restoring ecosystems can also mitigate the effects of climate change, which exacerbates land degradation. Degraded land loses its capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, further contributing to global warming. By restoring its ecosystems, India can enhance its carbon sinks and meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The EU's Nature Restoration Law sets an important precedent for countries worldwide. Given the alarming levels of land degradation and biodiversity loss in India, such a law in India would not only help India restore its degraded ecosystems but also contribute to its socio-economic development and climate resilience. The clock is ticking, and the time to act is now.

The law enacted by the European Union recently is a model worth following





The case for a nature restoration law in India

(22 October)

- The degradation of natural ecosystems is a pressing global issue, and India faces significant challenges due to its geographical and ecological diversity.
- Approximately 30% of India's total geographical area is experiencing land degradation, highlighting the need for a comprehensive nature restoration law.
- The Nature Restoration Law (NRL), enacted by the European Union (EU), serves as an inspiring model for India to address its environmental crises.
- The NRL was adopted by the EU's Environmental Council on June 17, 2024, aiming to restore the health of Europe's ecosystems.
- The regulation was endorsed by a majority of EU member states, representing 66.07% of the EU population, marking a significant step in global environmental governance.
- The law mandates that at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas must be restored by 2030, with a goal of fully restoring all ecosystems in need by 2050.
- The NRL is part of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the European Green Deal, addressing the alarming trend of biodiversity loss, with over 80% of Europe's habitats in poor condition.
- It focuses on a range of ecosystems, including forests, agricultural lands, rivers, and urban spaces, and includes specific measures like restoring 25,000 kilometers of rivers and planting three billion trees by 2030.
- India faces similar, if not more severe, environmental challenges, with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) reporting that nearly 97.85 million hectares (29.7%) of India's area underwent land degradation in 2018-19.
- Land degradation in India has increased from 94.53 million hectares in 2003-05, with desertification affecting 83.69 million hectares.
- Key states affected include Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, which together account for 23.79% of India's desertified land area.
- India has made progress through initiatives like the Green India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, and National Afforestation Programme.
- However, the scale of the problem requires a more comprehensive approach, similar to the legally binding targets set by the EU's NRL.
- India needs its own nature restoration law to mandate the restoration of degraded landscapes, ensuring long-term sustainability of its ecosystems.

What a law in India could look like





- Restoration targets: Aim to restore 20% of degraded land by 2030; goal to restore all ecosystems by 2050 (forests, wetlands, rivers, agricultural lands, urban green spaces).
- Wetland restoration: Target restoring 30% of degraded wetlands by 2030, focusing on critical areas like the Sundarbans and Chilika Lake for biodiversity and carbon sequestration.
- Biodiversity in agriculture: Promote agroforestry and sustainable practices to restore farmlands; use indicators like the butterfly or bird index to track progress.
- River restoration: Focus on restoring free-flowing rivers, starting with major rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna, addressing pollution and obstructions.
- Urban green spaces: Ensure no net loss of green spaces in cities; promote urban forests in areas like Bengaluru and Delhi to combat heat islands and declining air quality.
- Economic and social benefits: Nature restoration could generate economic returns of up to \$10 trillion globally by 2030; in India, it could enhance agricultural productivity, improve water security, and create millions of jobs, especially in rural areas.
- Alignment with SDGs: Help India meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 15 for sustainable forest management and combating desertification.
- Climate change mitigation: Restoring ecosystems can mitigate climate change effects; degraded land loses carbon absorption capacity, contributing to global warming.
- Carbon sink enhancement: Restoring ecosystems enhances carbon sinks, helping India meet commitments under the Paris Agreement.
- Precedent set by EU: The EU's Nature Restoration Law serves as a model for countries worldwide; India's similar law could aid in ecosystem restoration and socio-economic development.
- Urgency for action: Given alarming levels of land degradation and biodiversity loss in India, the time to act is now.



Culture and society

Court verdict on citizenship law for Assam helps avoid fresh problems

In upholding Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, a provision introduced in 1985 to give effect to the core feature of the Assam Accord, the Supreme Court of India has helped preserve the existing legal regime for determining citizenship and identification of foreigners in Assam. Striking it down would have had the undesirable consequence of turning the clock back on the process laid down in statutory provisions and rules for the purpose. In its 4:1 decision, the Court has rightly seen the provision in the light of historical developments. While on one hand, Section 6A conferred deemed citizenship on all those who entered Assam from areas in erstwhile East Pakistan before January 1, 1966, it created, on the other, a system of registration for those who immigrated from that day to March 25, 1971, the day Pakistan began Operation Searchlight, a military drive to suppress the Bengali nationalist movement. The latter category of people had to be ordinarily residing in Assam and declared to be a foreigner by a tribunal before they could apply for registration as citizens. However, they would be ineligible to be on the electoral rolls for 10 years from the date of detection. Section 6A, as the Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud, says in his concurring opinion, was aimed at finding a middle ground between a humanitarian approach towards the immigrant population in Assam and ensuring that large-scale immigration does not result in the loss of the cultural, economic and political rights of the Assam people.

The majority has rejected the notion that the provision is unconstitutional on the ground that it treats Assam differentially from the rest of the country. It has noted that the citizenship provisions in the Constitution referred to 'citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution' and Parliament was not deprived of the power to introduce provisions on citizenship for a different category of people from a different date. In his main opinion, speaking for himself and two other judges, Justice Surya Kant has acknowledged the petitioners' "demographic anxiety", but did not believe that the idea of fraternity in the Constitution was threatened by a mere change in demography. It is not a misplaced fear when he says accepting the argument that demographic change could lead to an erosion of the cultural rights of a section of society may open the floodgates for similar challenges to undermine inter-State migration in the guise of protecting indigenous culture. At a time when the exercise to finalise a National Register of Citizens for Assam is in limbo – 19 lakh people have been identified as non-citizens, but there have been no further developments – any decision invalidating Section 6A would have created fresh complications.

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Culture and society (22 October)

Court verdict on citizenship law for Assam helps avoid fresh problems

- Supreme Court upheld Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, introduced in 1985 to implement the Assam Accord.
- Striking down Section 6A would have regressed the established legal framework for determining citizenship and identifying foreigners in Assam.
- The Court's 4:1 decision recognized historical developments related to citizenship in Assam.
- Section 6A grants deemed citizenship to those entering Assam from erstwhile East Pakistan before January 1, 1966.
- It establishes a registration system for those immigrating from January 1, 1966, to March 25, 1971; they must ordinarily reside in Assam and be declared foreigners by a tribunal.
- Individuals in the latter category cannot be on electoral rolls for 10 years post-detection.
- Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud noted Section 6A aimed to balance humanitarian concerns for immigrants with the rights of Assamese people.
- The majority opinion rejected claims of unconstitutionality based on differential treatment of Assam compared to the rest of India.
- Citizenship provisions in the Constitution addressed "citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution," allowing Parliament to create specific citizenship rules.
- Justice Surya Kant acknowledged petitioners' "demographic anxiety" but found it did not threaten the idea of fraternity in the Constitution.
- Concerns about demographic changes eroding cultural rights could lead to challenges against inter-State migration under the guise of cultural protection.
- The National Register of Citizens exercise in Assam is currently stalled, with 19 lakh people identified as non-citizens, and invalidating Section 6A would complicate the situation further.



Allow for deliberation

Lack of a legislature, regional autonomy in Ladakh have led to current protests

When decisions are taken for constituents in a province without their explicit consent or their deliberation, there could be a blowback even if the constituents initially welcomed the changes with hope. Such is the case with the **abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and its bifurcation into two Union Territories (UT)**, which includes the erstwhile constituent of Ladakh. While the discontent in the Kashmir Valley with both decisions is well documented, a Lokniti survey points to **four-tenths of Jammu residents opposing the abrogation of special status and a larger majority seeking restoration of statehood**. When Ladakh was hived off into a UT from the then unified State, the **government justified this as reflecting a demand from residents of Ladakh – Leh in particular – who were concerned about the predominance of the Kashmir Valley and Jammu in its erstwhile legislature**. Yet, five years on, the protests in Ladakh with the demand for statehood or the province's inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution – which has provisions regarding administration of tribal areas in some North-Eastern States – confirm the unpopularity of the decisions made by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government. While Ladakh is host to two Autonomous Hill Councils in Leh and Kargil, the absence of an empowered legislature in the UT, which has meant little say for local governance in comparison to a larger writ for New Delhi, has given rise to these protests. The agitations, the one led by social activist Sonam Wangchuk in particular, with echoes in New Delhi, raise the question whether the Union government could have avoided the Machiavellian route of one-upmanship seen in 2019, which led to the current situation.

A larger question relates to how Ladakh has been viewed by New Delhi ever since 2019. Following Chinese incursions across the Line of Actual Control and recurring tensions in the region, Ladakh has largely been seen through a security lens. Local concerns related to livelihoods, environmental issues such as water scarcity, waste management and pollution and civic issues such as access to land for pastoral communities remain relatively unaddressed in the administrative scheme. The absence of a legislature in the newly formed UT is a key reason why residents seem agitated about the lack of deliberation or avenues to register their concerns. It goes without saying that the Union Government must find a way to meet the legitimate demands of Ladakh and grant it statehood. More importantly, the discontent also highlights the importance of preserving India's polished system of "asymmetric federalism" that has purposefully addressed grievances. S





Allow for deliberation (22 October)

Lack of a legislature, regional autonomy in Ladakh have led to current protests

- Decisions made for constituents without their explicit consent can lead to backlash, even if initially welcomed.
- This situation reflects the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and its division into two Union Territories (UT), including Ladakh.
- Discontent in the Kashmir Valley is well-documented; a Lokniti survey shows 40% of Jammu residents oppose the abrogation and a majority seek restoration of statehood.
- The government justified Ladakh's transition to a UT as a response to local demands, particularly from Leh, regarding representation concerns.
- Five years later, protests in Ladakh for statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule indicate unpopularity of the decisions made by the BJP-led government.
- Ladakh has two Autonomous Hill Councils in Leh and Kargil, but the lack of an empowered legislature limits local governance and increases dependence on New Delhi.
- Protests, notably led by activist Sonam Wangchuk, question whether the Union government could have avoided the contentious decisions of 2019.
- Since 2019, New Delhi has primarily viewed Ladakh through a security lens, especially following Chinese incursions and regional tensions.
- Local issues, including livelihoods, environmental concerns (water scarcity, waste management, pollution), and access to land for pastoral communities, remain largely unaddressed.
- The absence of a legislature in the new UT contributes to residents' frustration over a lack of avenues for voicing concerns.
- The Union Government must address Ladakh's legitimate demands and consider granting it statehood.
- Discontent in Ladakh underscores the need to preserve India's system of "asymmetric federalism" that addresses regional grievances.



AI's Cassandra moment

Nobel laureates are exceptional scientists but Geoffrey Hinton, the co-winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Physics, is particularly so. Few laureates have expressed regret over the consequences of their own prize-winning work; none before they won the coveted prize.

Hinton's regrets

In May 2023, Hinton, a pioneer of deep learning, who has nurtured talented researchers in the computer science and Artificial Intelligence (AI) domain, quit his advisory role at Google. His reasons, according to The New York Times, were to be able to speak more freely about the "dangers" posed by AI. He said that a part of him "regrets his life's work". Developments in the ideas that he pioneered enable today's learning machines to drive cars, write news reports, produce deepfakes, and take aim at professions that seem invulnerable to automatisms.

From being dormant for decades, neural networks, in his view, had suddenly become "a new and better form of intelligence". He reckons that it would not be too much of a leap to expect AI systems to soon create their own "sub-goals" that prioritised their own expansion. Moreover, AI machines are able to almost instantly "teach" and transmit their entire knowledge to other connected machines – a feat that is slower and error-ridden in the animal brain. He expressed concern that AI could fall into the "wrong hands" and believes that Russian President Vladimir Putin would have little compunction in weaponising AI against Ukraine.

Whether or not experts saw AI as apocalyptic was a matter of being "optimistic or pessimistic," he told MIT Technology Review, but there was near-consensus among those who understood these developments that AI presented a form of learning superior to that in people.

Ilya Sutskever, who completed



Jacob Koshy

AI systems may not be plotting to incinerate humanity, but they are mushrooming at a time when globalisation has withered, and corporations, not countries, are poised to control technological advances and neural networks

his doctoral studies under Hinton, mirrored his mentor's concerns. Sutskever as the Chief Scientist of OpenAI, the developer of ChatGPT, voted to fire Sam Altman as the CEO of the company last November. The coup failed, and ChatGPT lives in Microsoft's stable. OpenAI's foundational goal was to build "safe and responsible AI" and Sutskever, according to media reports, felt that the company was prioritising "profitability" over this original mission. Coincidentally, on the day that the Physics Nobel was announced, Hinton said that he was "particularly proud of the fact that one of my students (Sutskever) fired Sam Altman".

Should Hinton's assessment of the dangers of AI carry greater weight than, say, those of businessman Elon Musk, who has also spoken of AI as being a "risk to humanity"? Can a scientific authority always be trusted upon to do the right thing?

A lesson from history

In August 1939, Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard, his former colleague and friend and a fellow Jewish émigré, wrote one of history's most consequential letters, to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A year prior, Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman, working in Nazi Germany, had demonstrated nuclear fission, or the breaking up of uranium nuclei. With the spectre of World War II looming in Europe, Szilard and Einstein were concerned that a "large mass of uranium" could "liberate considerable quantities of energy" and create the most powerful bombs ever known, which could prove catastrophic.

The letter was essentially a plea to Roosevelt to fund and thoroughly investigate uranium and atomic bomb research. Einstein, a Nobel laureate already acknowledged as the world's greatest scientist, brought considerable cachet with his words though his only connection to atomic research was in showing that mass and energy were

equivalent. This letter, however, became the impetus for the Manhattan Project, a scientific and military effort by the U.S. to develop atomic bombs. While the scientists had hope that the U.S.'s efforts would prevent Germany from developing and deploying the most lethal weapon, it was finally the U.S. that ended up dropping atomic bombs on Japan, killing at least 2,00,000 people and inflicting inter-generational harm. Germany gave up on its bomb efforts almost mid-way through the war, while the U.S. went on to build and test more destructive hydrogen bombs that prompted Russia to up the stakes with even more powerful ones.

Before the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima, Szilard had appealed to the U.S. to control nuclear technology and prevent a nuclear arms race. The world knows how that has panned out. Today, nine countries together possess at least 12,000 nuclear warheads, with 90% of these distributed between Russia and the U.S. For all its purported potential for good, nuclear power barely accounts for 10% of the world's electricity. Einstein deeply regretted his letter to Roosevelt and later said that it was the "one great mistake" of his life – his fears of German atomic armament proved unfounded and the country he had trusted to do better had instead chartered humanity into the Atomic Age.

AI systems may not be plotting to incinerate humanity, but they are mushrooming at a time when globalisation has withered; and corporations, not countries, are poised to control technological advances and neural networks, and are also killing more jobs than creating new ones.

Hinton has called for the regulation of AI. If this leads to corporations monopolising AI, instead of facilitating an honest reckoning of its adverse consequences, it would be a redux of the Einsteinian mistake.

jacob.koshy@thehindu.co.in

On sanctions and shadow fleets

What are Flags of Convenience? How do corporations with large fleets obscure ownership and origin of cargo? Why has India been accused of hosting a shadow fleet? What are the different ways through which ships make sure they don't lose their insurance?

EXPLAINER

M. Kalyanaraman

The story so far:

While covering the Russia-Ukraine conflict, many western media outlets have used the term 'shadow fleet' to describe tanker ships that carry Russian crude oil or oil products to other countries. The term conjures up images of pirate-like vessels and phantom owners trading in illegal, contraband substances. India has been painted as a host of a shadow fleet that is 'laundering' Russian crude.

How are sanctions implemented?

When the U.S. sanctions a country, as is the case with Russia, it launches investigations into entities, companies and individuals who violate the sanctions. Their assets in the U.S. are seized, bank accounts accessible to the western banking system are frozen and, sometimes, criminal prosecutions are launched against them. U.S. sanctions against Russian oil mandate that Russia can only sell its crude oil at \$60 a barrel. Current market prices are at least \$15 more. This is to ensure Russia doesn't profit much from oil sales and use that to fund its war effort in Ukraine.

What is structure of global shipping?

The global shipping industry is highly diversified. Greeks own 20% of the global merchant shipping fleet with China now crossing Japan to become the second leading nation in terms of merchant shipping fleet ownership. Most ships are built and repaired in China, Japan and South Korea. Yet, marine insurance, ship finance as well as global shipping regulations revolve around the U.K. and rest of Europe. U.S. sanctions are sought to be enforced through these levers.

Each ship is associated with different stakeholders at various nations and locations. Although tracking systems



Full throttle: The crude oil tanker RN Polaris near the port city of Nakhodka, Russia, in 2022. REUTERS

allow authorities to access previous ports of call, some companies do succeed in hiding the original source of their cargo. Ships are registered in particular nations called flag states as they fly that country's flag. Flag states were meant to indicate the origins of the ship.

To beat sanctions, ships often hop between flags. There are Flags of Convenience (FoCs), such as Panama and Liberia, which started out as tax avoidance entities, and to avoid too rigorous a scrutiny or inspection of a ship. FoCs obscure the ownership of ships. Then there are classifications societies (class, in shipping parlance) that certify ship structures and machinery for safety of life at sea and marine pollution, facilitating insurance cover for these. An insurance type called Protection and Indemnity (P&I) covers loss of life and damage to property. These P&I insurance

firms form 'clubs' to pool the risk.

How do ships keep their insurance?

Turkey, a member of the NATO, has been found to be extensively trading in Russian oil. A Turkish-owned ship found to be trading in Russian oil at more than \$60 a barrel may lose its P&I club, since clubs are controlled from London and the U.S. has leverage there. However, the owner can divest the management of the vessel and contract with a European manager that has P&I cover. And the ship will be back in business with the same owner but with a new European manager.

Corporations with large fleets often set up shell companies that own just one or two ships. Such complex ownership structures hide the true identity of a ship and its owner. Yet, another phenomenon is registering the ships within jurisdictions that are not compliant with regulatory

agencies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Eswatini, a country in southern Africa, is not a signatory to the IMO charter. It has therefore emerged as a FoC.

What is the accusation against India?

Soon after sanction enforcements, many Russian ships struck alliances with Indian firms. Many switched their base to Dubai where Indians have a presence in shipping. The Indian Register of Shipping (IRS), a classification society, did see an increase in the ships it was certifying, bolstering charges of Indian involvement in shadow fleets. Noting that it has been linked to Russian shipping entities, the IRS said its primary responsibility is to the safety of a vessel and that it will not be compromised. IRS reported that it has indeed been asked to provide safety-related classification services to a number of vessels by Dubai-based entities. These vessels were registered under the flag administrations of Liberia and Cyprus and none flew the Russian flag, the IRS reported.

In 2015, when Iran was sanctioned, some 160 ships, many with trade links to Iranian oil, switched their classification society to the Korean Register of shipping - Korea is a U.S. ally. Sometimes renaming a vessel can help to erase association with sanctions.

Can U.S. sanctions be enforced?

Many agencies and shipping experts acknowledge that sanctions on Russian oil cannot be rigorously enforced because of its potential impact on world economy, the complex ways in which the shipping industry is structured, and because ownerships and origins of stakeholders are obscure and often based on voluntary disclosure.

More recently, the BBC reported that the U.K. had taken action only mild action against some 35 U.K. companies found to have violated the price cap set by sanctions. Industry voices there say that taking strong action would be bad for U.K. businesses.



On Railways decision to shrink advance booking period

Has the Railways shortened the Advance Reservation Period before? How do longer booking windows give rise to frauds? Are these rules extended to foreign passengers as well?

GS Paper II: Governance

Maitri Porecha

The story so far:

One could book railway tickets four months in advance for long journeys. Now passengers will only be able to book tickets on Indian Railways two months in advance, a circular released by the Railway Board earlier this month stated.

When will the Advance Reservation Period (ARP) be effective?

The circular states that the new ARP rules will kick in from November 1, 2024 onwards, and that the booking window for passengers to reserve their tickets will open 60 days in advance (excluding the actual day of journey). However, if a passenger has booked any tickets up to October 31 (under the earlier 120-day period rule), all those bookings will remain intact, and the passenger also has the facility to cancel those tickets at will.

By shortening the reservation period to

60 days, the Railways has reversed its 16-year old policy of reserving tickets 120 days in advance, which had kicked in from May 1, 2008. Before this, from 1995 to 2007, the booking window was restricted to 60 days. Interestingly, between 1988 to 1993, Railways had experimented with shortening the advance booking window to as less as only 45 days. Before this, once between 1981 to 1985, the Railways had opened the ARP for a 90-day window.

Why was such a decision taken?

Railways officials observed that 120 days was too long a period for planning journeys, and that it led to a high amount of ticket cancellations. "Currently, up to 21% passengers who book their tickets end up cancelling them," a senior official stated. While allotting seats/berths, officials also observed that there was a wastage of seats/berths because of passengers who would not turn up for journeys and at the same time would not

bother to cancel their tickets. "4% to 5% passengers don't turn up (which is considered as no show)," the official further said. "Another trend Railways noticed is that between 88% to 90% rail reservations occur in the period of 60 days, hence it was thought prudent to reduce the ARP," another senior official told *The Hindu*.

Do longer booking windows increase frauds?

The rationale given by the officials to reduce ARP is that when passengers do not cancel their tickets and do not turn up for journeys, it opens up possibilities for fraud. "We observed frauds such as impersonation, railway officials taking money illegally to allot empty berths etc. With shortening reservation period this could be prevented," the official said.

Secondly, there is an immense challenge of curtailment of touts that operate on the railway network. "When reservation periods are longer, there is a

greater chance that touts end up blocking a substantial tranche of tickets. Shortening the period of ARP will encourage purchase of more tickets by genuine passengers," the official added.

Parallely, Railway officials state that the decision to either reduce or increase the ARP window is open for debate.

"There are two opposing camps that debate how to fix the ARP window. There is one camp in the Ministry that believes in opening up advance reservation for the entire year, and that passengers should be allowed to book and cancel tickets round the year during the period of 365 days. This camp believes that opening up the reservation window year-long will fetch railways revenues in advance. However this facility is currently only available for foreign tourists, who avail of a certain quota to plan their train journeys across India," the official added.

Which groups of passengers are exempt from ARP rule?

Apart from foreign tourists, the Union Railway Ministry had stated that there is no impact on General class tickets as they are purchased just before the journey. It has also stated that for certain trains like Taj Express and Gomti Express it was noticed that tickets are booked almost immediately by passengers who wish to travel in these sitting trains. "They are exempt from ARP rule as passengers who wish to travel in these trains book tickets almost immediately a day or two in advance," the first official added.

THE GIST

The circular states that the new ARP rules will kick in from November 1, 2024 onwards, and that the booking window for passengers to reserve their tickets will open 60 days in advance (excluding the actual day of journey).

Railways officials observed that 120 days was too long a period for planning journeys, and that it led to a high amount of ticket cancellations.

The rationale given by the officials to reduce ARP is that when passengers do not cancel their tickets and do not turn up for journeys, it opens up possibilities for fraud.



How policies shape high-performance building standards and climate goals

Governments are trying to adopt high-performance buildings through policies and financing mechanisms that promote energy efficiency, resource management, and carbon neutrality. India has made significant progress through initiatives under its National Action Plan on Climate Change

[GS Paper III: Environment](#)

[Sandhya Patil](#)

In response to the pressures of climate mitigation as well as adaptation, High-Performance Buildings (HPBs) are emerging as essential solutions in the construction sector. They address both urban and climate challenges since the built environment contributes to these issues and presents opportunities for change. HPBs are designed to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, minimise energy and water use, and cut operational costs using climate-adaptive designs. They also improve their occupants' well-being, making them attractive to both businesses and occupants.

Beyond environmental benefits, HPBs offer financial advantages like enhanced property value, lower utility bills, and access to carbon financing. Governments worldwide are trying to adopt HPBs through progressive policies and financing mechanisms that promote energy efficiency, resource management, and carbon neutrality. India is also beginning to align its policy frameworks and business strategies to support these structures.

Policies supporting energy efficiency
Energy efficiency is central to HPB design and drives sustainable construction practices. Many governments are actively promoting energy-efficient buildings as part of their climate strategies.

The European Union's 'Green Deal', which targets climate neutrality by 2050, mandates energy-efficient building designs and retrofits. Germany's KfW Bank offers low-interest loans for energy-efficient projects while Denmark's strict BR18 building codes provide

incentives for sustainable construction practices. In the U.S., programmes like Energy Star and the LEED certification encourage energy efficiency and offer tax credits for green-building initiatives.

The construction industry contributes about 39% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions worldwide, and these policies suggest reducing energy consumption isn't just technically feasible: it could be financially viable, too, with the right incentives.

How is India supporting HPBs?

India has made significant progress in promoting energy-efficient buildings through initiatives under its National Action Plan on Climate Change. The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), aims to reduce buildings' energy demands by up to 30%. The Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) lists more than 3,000 registered projects focusing on sustainable practices and lowering carbon emissions. The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) promotes energy-efficient designs, with more than 14,000 certified projects covering 12.5 billion sq. ft.

Hyderabad, Noida, and Pune also offer higher floor area ratios and other incentives for buildings that meet ECBC standards, leading to a noticeable increase in green registrations and thus significant energy savings. The BEE is targeting 30% of new buildings to achieve net-zero status by 2030, in line with the national commitment.

How do HPBs make financial sense?

As green technologies become more affordable, the initial cost difference between conventional buildings and

high-performance buildings is narrowing. HPBs deliver substantial energy savings and reduce emissions at little or no incremental costs compared to conventional buildings.

For example, Infosys successfully integrated energy-efficient designs into its campuses, using natural lighting, energy-efficient air conditioning, and smart performance verification. This reduced its energy consumption by up to 45%, resulting in significant cost savings. HPBs also improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort, contributing to employee well-being.

HPBs also command higher property values due to lower operating costs, smaller environmental footprint, and growing demand from environmentally conscious buyers and tenants. These properties benefit from enhanced asset valuation, driven by higher net operating incomes, lower vacancy rates, and longer lease durations. The financial benefits of energy efficiency translate to better capitalisation rates, which investors use to assess the value of a property relative to its income potential.

In India, commercial properties with green certifications like IGBC, GRIHA or LEED attract premium rents and have higher occupancy. Examples include ITC's Green Centre in Gurugram, the TCS Siruseri IT Park in Chennai, the Nirlon knowledge Park in Mumbai, and Embassy's commercial developments in Bengaluru.

How are HPBs financed?

Carbon financing supports HPBs by converting their carbon savings into financial value, easing the way for developers to secure funding. Carbon credits – tradable permits allowing

companies to offset their carbon emissions – play a key role in this process. Projects earn these credits by reducing emissions and/or removing carbon from the atmosphere.

In regions with carbon pricing, like the European Union and China, HPBs that improve energy efficiency and lower emissions can generate carbon credits. These carbon credits provide a significant financial incentive for developers to invest in sustainable building practices. However, to maximise the potential of these systems, it's important to strengthen the accounting practices and ensure better transparency in the monitoring, reporting, and verification of the credits.

Green bonds and climate-focused funds also offer ways to finance HPBs. In 2020 alone, green bonds worth \$269.5 billion were issued worldwide. Investors are increasingly interested in projects that align with sustainability goals. Global organisations like the World Bank and the Green Climate Fund also provide financial support for HPBs.

These financing mechanisms help offset the higher upfront costs of building HPBs, making them more affordable and promoting their wider use. By participating in carbon markets, trading energy and carbon savings, and securing green or climate funding, developers can make HPBs more financially viable while also contributing to global efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Sandhya Patil is a sustainability expert with the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IHS) and anchors technical assistance for ASSURE. The author does not have any financial interests vested with any company or organisation that would benefit from this article.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

- The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping.
- Established in 1948 through the Convention on the International Maritime Organization, it came into force in 1958.
- Headquartered in London, IMO sets international standards for safety, security, and



environmental performance in international shipping.

Key Objectives of IMO:

1. **Safety and Security:** The IMO aims to ensure the safety of ships, crews, and passengers by formulating regulations for the construction, design, equipment, and operation of ships.
2. **Environmental Protection:** One of IMO's major responsibilities is to prevent marine pollution from ships. It addresses pollution by oil, chemicals, garbage, sewage, and air emissions from ships.
3. **Legal Framework:** The IMO develops and maintains a comprehensive regulatory framework, including international conventions, codes, and recommendations for shipping.
4. **Efficiency:** To ensure that shipping can thrive as a safe, secure, and efficient mode of transport, IMO promotes better trade facilitation and cooperation between member states.

Historical Background:

- **1948:** IMO was established by a convention adopted by the United Nations Conference.
- **1959:** IMO held its first meeting.
- **1960:** The first major accomplishment of IMO was the adoption of the **International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)**, which remains the most important treaty regulating maritime safety.
- **1973:** IMO adopted the **International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)** to minimize pollution of the oceans and seas.

Recent Updates and Developments:

1. **IMO's Role in Climate Action:** The **IMO Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships** was adopted in 2018, aiming for at least a 50% reduction in GHG emissions from international shipping by 2050, compared to 2008 levels.
2. The focus on **decarbonization** has intensified, and IMO is revising this strategy as part of global climate change commitments, including the **Paris Agreement**.
3. **Implementation of EEXI and CII:** In 2023, the IMO introduced new measures, including the **Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI)** and the **Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII)**, to enhance the energy efficiency of existing ships, as part of its effort to cut carbon emissions.
4. **Safety Initiatives:** In collaboration with **the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)**, IMO has strengthened regulations on container ship safety and fire safety, particularly after incidents involving large vessels.
5. **International Maritime Research Board (IMRB):** IMO is working on the establishment of a board dedicated to research and development in maritime technologies for reducing carbon footprints.

India's Involvement in IMO:



- India has been a member of the IMO since 1959 and plays an active role in shaping global maritime policies. India has taken key steps to ensure its compliance with IMO standards:
- **Green Shipping Initiative:** The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways of India has been actively supporting the IMO's decarbonization initiatives. It is collaborating with IMO to promote **Green Ports** and **Low Carbon Shipping**.
- **International Conventions:** India has ratified important IMO conventions such as SOLAS, MARPOL, and the **International Convention on Load Lines**.
- **Maritime Training:** Institutions such as the **Indian Maritime University (IMU)** and **Directorate General of Shipping (DGS)** have been instrumental in training maritime professionals in line with IMO's standards.

World Bank and the Green Climate Fund

1. World Bank

- The **World Bank** is an international financial institution established in 1944 that provides loans and grants to the governments of low- and middle-income countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects.
- Its goal is to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity globally. The institution consists of five entities, including the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** and the **International Development Association (IDA)**.
- **IBRD** provides loans to middle-income and credit-worthy low-income countries, while the **IDA** focuses on the poorest nations. The World Bank is involved in infrastructure projects, education, healthcare, and improving governance.
- One of its key initiatives in recent years has been addressing **climate change**. The World Bank finances green projects, including renewable energy, sustainable urban development, and disaster risk management.
- **Recent Updates:** In October 2023, the World Bank pledged to increase climate financing, aiming to channel \$200 billion in climate action projects between 2021 and 2025. It supports nations in transitioning to cleaner energy and mitigating the effects of climate change.

2. Green Climate Fund (GCF)

The **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** is a financial mechanism established under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** in 2010, during the **Cancun Conference of Parties (COP16)**. It aims to support developing countries in their efforts to respond to climate change by funding projects that help in both **mitigation** (reducing





greenhouse gas emissions) and **adaptation** (coping with the impacts of climate change).

- The GCF's role is to assist developing countries in transitioning to low-emission and climate-resilient economies. The fund is governed by a board, and contributions come from developed countries and private entities.
- **Recent Updates:** As of 2024, the GCF has allocated over \$12 billion for more than 200 projects globally. A key recent project is the **Global Shield Against Climate Risks**, launched to assist vulnerable nations facing extreme weather events. India, with its large population and vulnerability to climate change, has received funding for renewable energy projects and urban climate resilience efforts.

Key Data:

- **World Bank (Established):** 1944
- **Green Climate Fund (Established):** 2010
- **World Bank Climate Financing Target (2021-2025):** \$200 billion
- **GCF Total Pledges (2024):** \$12 billion+



Pope Francis faces criticism as Vatican summit dodges topic of women clergy

Reuters

VATICAN CITY

Advocates for a greater role for women in the Catholic Church say Pope Francis is failing their cause at a global meeting of Church leaders drawing to a close this week, by shunting aside the question of finally letting women be ordained as clergy.

Women's roles in the Church have been hotly debated on the sidelines during the Synod of Bishops, the second of two month-long Vatican summits being held a year apart following an unprecedented two-year canvassing of opinions of Catholics across the world.

At the first synod a year ago, members said it was "urgent" for the global Church to better include women in decision-making



Pope Francis attends a session of the 16th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops at the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican on Monday. AP

roles. Pope Francis has taken some steps to promote women to positions previously held only by men, including letting nearly 60 women serve among the 368 voting members at this synod.

But advocates say the Pope has taken the issue of women clergy off the table at the synod, by asking the

Vatican's typically conservative doctrinal office to take over study of whether women can be ordained as deacons.

"What has been done so far to improve the condition of women in the Church has only been for appearance's sake," said Lucetta Scaraffia, an Italian journalist who edited a

monthly women's magazine published by Vatican's newspaper for seven years.

"It is useless for women to wait for 'the good pope' who will recognise their true value," she said.

The Catholic Church has an all-male clergy, and Pope John Paul II declared it had no authority to ordain women as priests. But church historians say there is evidence that in earlier centuries women served as deacons – ordained ministers who, unlike priests, cannot celebrate the Mass.

Pope Francis, 87, has already created two previous Vatican commissions to consider ordaining women as deacons, but has not moved forward on it. The issue is one of 10 subjects that he removed from the synod's considerations and assigned to study groups to report to him next June.

Pope Francis faces criticism as Vatican summit dodges topic of women clergy (22 October)

- Advocates for women's roles in the Catholic Church criticize Pope Francis for sidelining the issue of women's ordination during a global Church leaders' meeting.
- Discussions about women's roles have been prominent at the Synod of Bishops, part of a two-year consultation process with Catholics worldwide.
- The first synod emphasized the urgent need for greater inclusion of women in decision-making roles.
- Pope Francis has promoted some women to positions traditionally held by men, including allowing nearly 60 women to serve as voting members at the synod.





- Critics argue that the Pope has effectively removed the question of women clergy from the synod's agenda by delegating the study of women's ordination to the conservative doctrinal office.
- Lucetta Scaraffia, an Italian journalist, claims that improvements for women in the Church have been superficial and merely for appearances.
- The Catholic Church maintains an all-male clergy, and Pope John Paul II stated the Church lacks authority to ordain women as priests.
- Historical evidence suggests that women served as deacons in earlier centuries, though they cannot celebrate the Mass.
- Pope Francis has established two previous Vatican commissions to explore the ordination of women as deacons but has not advanced the issue.
- The topic of women's ordination is one of ten subjects removed from the synod's discussions, with plans for study groups to report back to the Pope in June.



WC might be the first sign of the changing landscape

The T20 extravaganza saw many firsts in the women's game: the boundaries pushed back and no Australia, England in the knockouts; NZ's memorable triumph saw the scales even out

Lavanya L

DUBAI

A new champion. A redemption story for the ages. Ageing warhorses finally getting their day in the sun. The end of a 24-year-long wait. New Zealand's maiden T20 World Cup triumph capped off a rather special edition of the tournament that's finally seeing the scales even out in the women's game.

The ninth edition of the tournament, hosted in the UAE saw the first-ever Women's World Cup final without Australia or England.

A transitioning Australian team, without injured leader Alyssa Healy, was beaten quite comprehensively in the first semifinal by South Africa. West Indies - with its batting ballistics helped generously by England's slipperiness in the field - showed Heather Knight and Co. the door. India, the third prong in cricket's power circle at the moment, also drifted out of contention in the group stage.

After much talk about the low and slow wickets were taking the zing out of how World Cup cricket should be and a larger impatience in how the players were taking time to adjust to the challenging



Scintillating show: New Zealand, which ambushed India in its opening game, went from strength to strength as the tournament progressed. GETTY IMAGES

heat and humidity of the Middle East, the final week delivered.

While Group-A (Australia, New Zealand, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan) was dubbed the group of the death, the merciless slashing happened in Group-B (England, South Africa, Scotland, Bangladesh, West Indies) with England. There's a cruel irony in India having had a chance to qualify despite losing two games, but England was straight out for having one bad game (a colossally bad one at that).

With over 80 dropped catches during the course of the tournament, fielding

ended up being the difference between teams especially in crunch situations. It cost England a knockout spot. It cost India against New Zealand. The 'Ring of Fire' in Dubai was particularly notorious with players across the board admitting that the ball was lost on them for a few minutes against the blinding light.

Boundaries in Sharjah and Dubai were longer than ones drawn in for women's games in say, Mumbai or even Chennai. The 60-73m peripheries in some areas made six-hitting difficult. Slow outfielders made scoring along the

ground challenging. While boundaries were slow to become frequent, many teams adapted their shots to clear the ropes and maximise on scoring opportunities.

A new champion is a great sign for a World Cup that's looking to expand. The reducing gap between the top three means more competitive games and events. Scotland broke through to the World Cup scene this time, but for these watershed moments to make sense, it needs to be backed up with bilateral support and more game time against higher-quality opponents.





WC might be the first sign of the changing landscape (22 October)

The T20 extravaganza saw many firsts in the women's game: the boundaries pushed back and no Australia, England in the knockouts; NZ's memorable triumph saw the scales even out

- New Zealand's maiden T20 World Cup triumph marks the end of a 24-year wait and a significant redemption story.
- The ninth edition of the tournament, hosted in the UAE, featured the first-ever Women's World Cup final without Australia or England.
- Australia, missing injured leader Alyssa Healy, was beaten by South Africa in the first semi-final.
- The West Indies eliminated England with strong batting performances, while India failed to advance past the group stage.
- Criticism arose regarding the low and slow wickets affecting gameplay, as players struggled to adjust to the Middle Eastern heat and humidity.
- Group A (Australia, New Zealand, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan) was labeled the "group of death," while Group B (England, South Africa, Scotland, Bangladesh, West Indies) saw notable eliminations.
- India had opportunities to qualify despite losing two matches, while England was ousted after one significantly poor performance.
- Over 80 dropped catches during the tournament highlighted the impact of fielding on match outcomes.
- England's fielding mistakes cost them a knockout spot, and India faced a similar fate against New Zealand.
- Players reported difficulties with visibility due to the blinding light at the 'Ring of Fire' in Dubai.
- The longer boundaries in Sharjah and Dubai (60-73m) made six-hitting challenging, while slow outfielders hindered scoring.
- Many teams adapted their batting techniques to maximize scoring opportunities despite the difficulties.
- A new champion signals positive growth for the World Cup and indicates a more competitive environment among teams.
- The narrowing gap between the top teams suggests a need for more competitive games and events.
- Scotland's breakthrough into the World Cup highlights the importance of bilateral support and more game time against higher-quality opponents.



A dream come true for a loyal servant of New Zealand cricket

It was indeed a seminal moment for Bates to lay her hands on an ICC silverware after being so close all these years along with the past, present and future players was the icing on the cake and the stuff of legends

Lavanya L
DUBAI

A usually happy-go-lucky Sophie Devine welled up when asked about her teammate, former captain and friend, Suzie Bates. Tears were already brimming at the surface given that New Zealand made its first World Cup semifinal since 2016, beating Pakistan in its final T20 World Cup group game in Dubai a week ago.

"Sometimes, I forget how lucky I've been to play with Suze. You talk to any cricketer who has had the joy of playing alongside her, against her, and they'll say that she's one of the greatest humans ever. And for us to be here in this tournament - it might be our last, who knows - to have a little moment there and connect."

"It is really special because we have been through a lot together. We've grown up together. She's probably grown up a bit more than me (smirks)," an emotional Devine said.

In the span of a week, Bates and Devine brushed aside West Indies in the penultimate clash before blowing away South Africa in the final to lift its maiden T20 World Cup crown and its first ICC trophy since the ODI World title in 2000.

Bates has seen the tides change around the White Ferns in world cricket since 2006. For her, memories of their first T20 World Cup final are still crystal clear.

"We hadn't played a lot of T20 cricket. The ODI World Cup had just ended and we had lost to England in the final and then made the T20 World Cup final too at Lord's. It was before the men's game," Bates told *The Hindu*.

"I remember batting at Lord's. That was pretty special for the first time. Having made it to the final, I was really gutted that we came second. Looking back, making two back-to-back finals in a short span of time was pretty cool. But, every edition we haven't won is a huge disappointment because every team is there to win. We haven't been able to do that since I've been in the side."

The White Ferns folded for just 85 in that game, but hindsight has softened that sting a little, 14 years on.

"When I was younger, especially those three World Cup finals that I played in early on, I wasn't able to contribute how I would have liked with the bat. I was disappointed probably for a month afterwards and just really flat about how I went. I blamed myself a bit for the team's performance which, looking back, was a bit silly."

Bates, hailed among the greatest cricketers her nation has produced, has been formally playing the game in higher tiers of competition since the age of 15. For a long time, she juggled basketball and cricket, even representing the Kiwis at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Cricket became her sole priority when captaincy landed in her lap, but basketball was never discarded. She took on a coaching role with the Otago Nuggets in 2021 when shoulder surgery kept her away from cricket for much of the season.

She championed power hitting in the early eras of the T20 game in the women's vertical and her performances made her one of the first formally contracted players in New Zealand. As the most prolific scorer for the White Ferns, she has also cemented her place in the history books.

Evolving duties

In the recently concluded T20 World Cup, the 37-year-old was tasked with easing 20-year-old Georgia Flower onto the rocky road of opening the batting. That preceded helping Devine band the team together, as it looked to get back on track after an abysmal 10-match losing streak coming into this World Cup.

"I'm probably a bit more of a realist of where the games are and how much England, Australia and India have grown. Although we're not getting the results we used to against those nations as consistently, the game has just changed so much and the depth that they've developed makes them really competitive," Bates added.

"I try not to look at the outcome and the results and I know that's what everyone else looks at. For me, there's got to be individual progress and clarity on how we're growing as a team or where people are contributing. For my own sanity, I try to avoid looking at the wins and losses table and focus on whether I am contributing."

Keeping up

New Zealand is one of the old powers of the sport, being the only nation besides Australia, England and West Indies (T20 title in 2016) to win a World Cup (the



2000 ODI crown). But it has had to watch other nations like India and South Africa edge ahead due to concerted efforts in building a talent pool and raising standards of play.

With tournaments like the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield (50-over) and the Super Smash (20-over), New Zealand's work to professionalise its cricketing spaces has been praiseworthy. However, there is another side to this story.

Outgoing captain Devine said earlier this year that "there isn't much depth coming through. New Zealand is a small country and it doesn't have millions of people playing cricket."

"I don't think it's catching up. I think we've progressed as naturally as New Zealand would have wanted to with their resources and domestic structure," Bates said.

"It's just that, when England, Australia and India decided to invest in the women's game, they progressed at faster rates with the players. They have the systems and a lot of money that has helped. It's not like we've gone backwards. It's just that the others have gone ahead at a faster rate."

"At some point, I have a feeling that the resources the others put in will plateau allowing us to draw level. It's just that the bigger nations with more resources have jumped out in front."

Never say never

As an individual player, Bates barely has a free window on her calendar. Right after the World Cup, she heads to Australia for a Women's Big Bash League stint with Hobart Hurricanes.

This will be her fourth WBBL franchise after Adelaide Strikers, Perth Scorchers and the Sydney Sixers. Bates has travelled the world participating in leagues from WBBL and The Hundred (Oval Invincibles). She has been a part of the Women's T20 Challenge, the exhibition tournament that preceded the Women's Premier League in India. She has also featured in the *FairBreak* Invitational, an ICC-sanctioned T20 tournament featuring a larger pool of Associate Nation players.

At her age and with her all-round skill, now whittled down primarily to batting, critics do postulate whether teams should begin looking past her to a potentially younger talent pool. It has prompted Bates to look within and figure out how she wanted to play her cricket. Over time, she has made peace with the outcomes of being a risk-taking opener.

"When I first started T20 cricket, scores were between 100 and 120. Sometimes, you could get a 50 off 50 balls and put your team in a losing position. Everyone started chasing strike rates and that did make things difficult at times in different conditions and with varying paces of bowling. Slow outfielders and grounds also come into play. So for me, adaptability, over anything else, and grinding out a win have been the top skills."

"The direction of the wind in the player market is not lost on Bates who has



approached franchise opportunities with pragmatism.

"About a decade ago, there weren't too many opportunities. Slowly, something new popped up. From the *Kia* Super League to the WBBL, it came to me and I was like, I want to be a part of that!"

"At one stage, I needed to play as much as possible for it to make financial sense. Now I am in a situation where I know I can't play forever, so every opportunity coming my way is an opportunity I might not get in the future."

"I've never felt like I've been in a position to want to say no. Having played this game for about 20 years now, playing international cricket is impossible to maintain. I'll play till my arms fall off and then I'll be done."

Stepping down from the captaincy of the White Ferns got a big load off Bates' shoulders and allowed her career room for exploration.

"Giving up captaincy rejuvenated my own career. As soon as you don't feel like going to training or don't feel like you want to get better or you don't find the joy of running out onto the field with the girls, that's when you know. And the hard thing for me is I can't imagine losing that; I love training."

Carrying the weight of the ecosystem back home has also worn out Devine, and Bates says she hopes to convince her friend and colleague to stick around for longer. "We've had those chats, Sophie and I, about what her plans are because that's a big hole both of us will leave, but I also stay out of that. We keep talking about our own plans and what we're



going to do after and when that might be. I want Sophie to hang on and so I'm sort of convincing her to play."

THE GIST

▼ A few weeks ago when Bates was asked what her wish list was, she promptly said, "Literally a World Cup win"

▼ Hailed among the greatest cricketers her nation has produced, she has been playing the game in the top tier since the age of 15

▼ The direction of the wind in the player market is not lost on Bates who has approached franchise opportunities with pragmatism

A dream come true for a loyal servant of New Zealand cricket (22 October)

It was indeed a seminal moment for Bates to lay her hands on an ICC silverware after being so close all these years along with the past, present and future players was the icing on the cake and the stuff of legends

- Sophie Devine became emotional discussing her teammate and friend, Suzie Bates, reflecting on their journey together in cricket.
- New Zealand reached its first World Cup semi-final since 2016 by defeating Pakistan in their final group match.
- Devine expressed gratitude for playing alongside Bates, recognizing her as one of the greatest people in the sport.
- New Zealand won the T20 World Cup by defeating South Africa in the final, marking their first ICC trophy since 2000.
- Bates recalled her first T20 World Cup final in 2009, where they lost to England, and her disappointment at not contributing more in earlier finals.
- Bates, recognized as one of New Zealand's greatest cricketers, began playing competitively at age 15 and balanced basketball with cricket early in her career.
- After shoulder surgery, she took on a coaching role in basketball while focusing on cricket.
- In the recent T20 World Cup, Bates mentored young player Georgia Plimmer and helped the team recover from a poor streak.
- Bates acknowledged the growing competition from teams like England, Australia, and India, and emphasized the importance of individual progress over wins.
- New Zealand cricket has historically been strong, but has fallen behind other nations in recent years due to a lack of resources.
- Bates noted that while New Zealand hasn't regressed, other countries have advanced more rapidly due to investment in women's cricket.
- Following the World Cup, Bates is set to play in the Women's Big Bash League with Hobart Hurricanes, continuing her global cricket journey.
- Critics have questioned her longevity in the game, but Bates embraces her role as a risk-taking opener and focuses on adaptability.
- She has always pursued opportunities in franchise cricket, recognizing the need to play as much as possible for financial and career reasons.
- Stepping down from captaincy rejuvenated Bates, allowing her to focus on enjoyment and improvement in her game.
- Bates hopes to convince Devine to continue playing longer, as both players discuss their future plans.





- New Zealand's recent success in the T20 World Cup represents a turning point for the team, overcoming past misfortunes.
- Bates fulfilled her wish of winning a World Cup at 37, uniting three generations of players on the team.
- The victory is a significant achievement, highlighting the collective effort and contribution of the entire team.

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