

DAILY PT POINTERS

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On Special Category Status for Andhra

Why is the demand for special status for Andhra Pradesh back in the political limelight? Why did Chandrababu Naidu, back in 2018, settle for a special package? Is the State qualified to be granted special status? What did the 14th Finance Commission state?

EXPLAINER

Sumit Bhattacharjee

The story so far:

The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, which bifurcated unified Andhra Pradesh into two States, was notified on March 1, 2014 and had come into force from June 2, 2014. While the Act had specified many things, there was no mention of giving a Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh. Now with the completion of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the demand for SCS to Andhra is again gaining attention.

What is the history?

Shortly after the reorganisation, in a debate in the Rajya Sabha on February 20, 2014, the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that "SCS would be extended to the State of Andhra Pradesh for a period of five years". This was appreciated and seconded by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader M. Venkaiah Naidu.

But after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over the reins of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)-led Union Government, the SCS was put on the back burner. When it was raised in both Houses by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and opposition MPs, it was said that Andhra Pradesh does not qualify for the SCS, firstly as per norms and secondly due to the dissolution of the Planning Commission in August 2014. The 14th Finance Commission had equated SCS with the general category status and had annulled SCS for new States.

Why does AP not qualify for the SCS?

The concept of SCS was first brought into existence through the recommendations made by the Fifth Finance Commission in 1969. It was done to benefit a few States through special grants from the Centre. The focus was on States that had socioeconomic issues and geographical



In progress: Ongoing construction of the bridge at Anaparthi, Andhra Pradesh on June 19, 2024.

disadvantages, such as hilly States.

The factors stood as the qualifying benchmark for the granting of SCS – States that comprise a majority tribal population, low density of population, hilly States and close to international borders. States that have socio-economic and industrial backwardness, and lack of adequate State finances. At present, the States that have the SCS include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand.

It was debated that Andhra Pradesh, based on the above structures, does not

qualify for the SCS and that the Finance Commission had already annulled it. However, the Centre offered Andhra Pradesh a special package (SP).

What did the special package entail?

Having been convinced that the SCS was ruled out by the Union Government, the first Chief Minister of residual Andhra Pradesh (2014-2019), Chandrababu Naidu of the TDP, who was then part of the NDA alliance, agreed for the SP. The SP included the recognition of the Pelararam irrigation project as a national project with full funding from the Union Government, tax concessions and special

assistance. Though Mr. Naidu accepted the SP, it was termed as a betrayal by the Opposition parties, including the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP).

In 2018, Mr. Naidu walked out of the alliance and also moved a no-confidence motion which failed. Political analysts say that Mr. Naidu had succumbed to pressure from the opposition, who were building up a strong campaign against the TDP, based on the SCS issue. His volte-face from SCS to SP was being publicised as a 'betrayal of the State'.

Does Andhra still qualify for SCS?

N.K. Singh, Chairman of the 14th Finance Commission, in his book *Portraits of Power*, stated that the 14th Finance Commission had never said that SCS cannot be given and that it was up to the Union Government to take a call.

The 14th Finance Commission instead of SCS had increased tax devolution to the State to 42% and also introduced revenue deficit grants for States facing a revenue gap, which Andhra had already received.

SCS, which has an arrangement of funding States in a ratio of 90:10 (90% the Centre and 10% the State), may not be a ruled out chapter for Andhra Pradesh. The Union Government can take a call and refer it to the 16th Finance Commission and the NITI Aayog, and can get back to the arrangement.

THE GIST

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▼ Ever since the bifurcation of unified Andhra Pradesh, the residual State has been facing a revenue deficit. Additionally, the debts of the State have shot up enormously.

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- Five factors stood as the qualifying benchmark for the granting of SCS — States that comprise a majority tribal population, low density of population, hilly States and close to international borders, States that have socio-economic and industrial backwardness, and lack of adequate State finances.
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PM Kisan Nidhi instalment released to 9.3-cr. farmers

Narendra Modi says his newly sworn-in government is fully committed to the welfare of farmers; Congress retorts saying he has done nobody a great favour as these are legitimate entitlements

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Monday released the 17th instalment of the PM Kisan Nidhi scheme as the first decision of the new Narendra Modi government.

The Opposition said Mr. Modi, by signing the file, has done nobody a great favour as these are legitimate entitlements due to the beneficiary farmers by his government's policy.

The Union Agriculture Ministry said in a release that after being sworn in as Prime Minister for the third time, Mr. Modi signed his first file authorising the release of the latest instalment. "This will benefit 9.3 crore farmers and distribute around ₹20,000 crore," the release said.

Mr. Modi said his government is fully committed to the welfare of farm-

Centre releases June tax devolution to States

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday decided to release an additional instalment of the tax devolution share of States along with their due share for June 2024.

Effectively, ₹1,39,750 crore is being transferred

to States this month.

The move is seen as a goodwill gesture by the newly-formed NDA government towards States, including its key alliance partners TDP and JD(U). Monday's transfer to States includes ₹14,056 crore for Bihar, and ₹5,655 crore to Andhra Pradesh.

ers. "It is therefore fitting that the first file signed on taking charge is related to farmers' welfare," he said.

Terming the decision a "great show", Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the 16th instalment of PM Kisan Nidhi was due in January, but was delayed by a month for the PM's electoral calculus.

"The 'one-third' Prad-

han Mantri has done nobody a great favour by signing this file: these are legitimate entitlements due to farmers according to his government's own policy," he said.

The Congress leader said Mr. Modi has made a habit of converting routine administrative decisions into some great bonanza he is bestowing on the people.

PMAY to assist construction of three crore houses

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took charge of his office for the third straight time on Monday, the new Union Cabinet took its first decision – to provide assistance for construction of three crore more rural and urban houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

"It has been decided in the Cabinet meeting today to provide assistance to three crore additional rural and urban households for the construction of houses," said a government official.

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), a Central Sector Scheme, aims at providing financial assistance to all cultivable landholding farmer families across the country, subject to certain exclusion criteria.
- Under the Scheme, an amount of Rs. 6000/- is transferred annually in three equal installments of Rs.2000/- directly into the Aadhaar Seeded bank accounts of the farmers.
- The PM-KISAN Scheme was launched in Feb. 2019. T

The Hindu : _GS 3-Space –Page 14

ISRO releases images of sun captured by Aditya-L1 during May

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two of the remote sensing payloads aboard India's maiden solar mission, Aditya-L1, have captured images of the sun and its dynamic activities during the solar storm, which occurred in May.

Between May 8 and 15, several X-class and M-class flares erupted in the active region AR13664 on the sun. This was associated with coronal mass ejections (CMEs) during May 8 and 9.

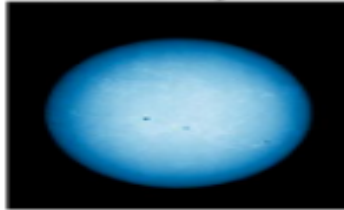
The ISRO said that during these eruptive events, two remote sensing instruments, Solar Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) and Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), were in baking and calibration modes, respectively, and could not observe the event during May 10 and 11. However, SUIT and VELC doors were opened on May 14.

Apart from capturing images, these payloads have made important observations.

On June 10, the ISRO released six images of the sun taken by the SUIT payload at different wavelengths. The images were acquired by the payload on May 17.

According to the ISRO, these images will help in

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An image of the sun captured by Aditya-L1 in May. (PH)

studying solar flares, energy distribution and sun spots, understanding and predicting space weather, and monitoring solar activity and UV radiation over a wide wavelength range, and also aid in the study of long-term solar variations. In addition, the VELC payload also carried out observations in one of the spectroscopic channels for the emission line 5303 Angstrom.

Raster scans of the solar corona were carried out on May 14 to capture the coronal activities in this particular spectral line.

Two other remote sensing payloads, SoLEXS and HELIOS, captured these events between May 8 and 9.

The two in-situ payloads, ASPeX and MAG, captured this event on May 10 and 11 during its passage through the sun-earth L1 point (LE).

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released stunning images of the Sun captured by the Aditya L1 satellite during a major geomagnetic storm in May.
- The two remote sensing payloads, namely the Solar UltraViolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) and the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), along with other payloads, captured these images from the Lagrange point in space.
- **Do you know?** Aditya-L1 is a satellite dedicated to the comprehensive study of the Sun. It has 7 distinct payloads developed, all developed indigenously.
 - Aditya in Sanskrit means the Sun. L1 here refers to Lagrange Point 1 of the Sun-Earth system. For common understanding, L1 is a location in space where the gravitational forces of two celestial bodies, such as the Sun and Earth, are in equilibrium. This allows an object placed there to remain relatively stable with respect to both celestial bodies.

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India welcomes Egypt, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia joining BRICS

Press Trust of India

MOSCOW

India on Monday welcomed Egypt, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia joining the BRICS as their representatives attended for the first time a key meeting of the grouping hosted by Russia.

Senior diplomat Dammu Ravi led the Indian delegation at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Nizhny Novgorod, in western Russia.

"A significant meeting in the format of expanded BRICS family. India wholeheartedly welcomes the



United front: India's BRICS Sherpa Dammu Ravi, left and Foreign Ministers of member countries at the meeting in Russia. REUTERS

new membership," the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal said.

The meeting on Monday

was the first ministerial meeting following BRICS expansion in 2023 when Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE

joined Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa as full-fledged BRICS members.

Ravi, Secretary (Economic Relations) in MEA, led the Indian delegation at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Nizhny Novgorod, it said.

The ministers reiterated their commitment to multilateralism and upholding the international law. They voiced their support for a comprehensive reform of the UN, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more democratic, representative, effective and efficient.

The BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations met on 10 June 2024 in Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation. They exchanged views on major global and regional trends and issues.

- This is the first meeting of foreign ministers since the expansion of BRICS in 2023. The 10 full members of the association include Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa with new members Egypt, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia joining the grouping in 2023.
- BRICS is an important grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising:41% of the world population,
- 24% of the world GDP
- over 16% share in world trade.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu –Species(GSIII)-Page 20



A Przewalski mare (right) and a stallion after being released at the Khomlin Tal reservation in Western Mongolia. AP

Wild horse species is returned to the Kazakh steppes

Agence France Presse

Przewalski horses are commonly referred to as one of the world's last breeds of wild horse.

The horses are capable of resisting harsh winters like the ones in Kazakhstan where temperatures can drop below minus 30 degrees C and food runs scarce.

- There are now 2,000 Przewalski horses around the world, mainly in China and Mongolia but also in France, Russia and living wild in the Chernobyl exclusion zone between Belarus and Ukraine
- IUCN Status : Endangered

Indian Express:GS 14-Polity and Governance

Powers of the Speaker

The Speaker's role is especially important in a coalition government, or when rival parties or factions seek to break each other in the House. The SC has underlined the supremacy of the Speaker's powers in such cases

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 10

AS THE 18th Lok Sabha prepares to meet, the TDP and JD(U), key allies of the BJP in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), are said to be jockeying for the post of Speaker. After a pro tem or temporary Speaker administers the oath to new members, the Speaker is chosen to be the Presiding Officer of the House.

What are the powers of the Speaker and why is the post crucial for the BJP, its allies, as well as the opposition?

Constitutional mandate

The Speaker has a key role in parliamentary democracy. The Constitution of India provides for the offices of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker who, according to Article 93, are to be elected "as soon as may be" after the commencement of the House.

The Speaker is elected by a simple majority in the House. The term ends with the dissolution of the House, unless the Speaker resigns or is removed from office before that. A motion of no-confidence can be moved against the Speaker with notice of 14 days as per Article 94 of the Constitution. Separately, the Speaker, like any other member of the House, can face disqualification.

There are no specific qualifications for becoming Speaker, which means any member is entitled to be considered. However, the post of Speaker is distinct from other members in the House.

From the placement of the Speaker's chair in the House to his having a casting vote, the post is distinct from other members in the House.



SPEAKERS OF THE COALITION ERA: (From left) Somnath Chatterjee, the late GMC Balayogi, and Purno ASangma. *Archive*

SPEAKERS OF LOK SABHA			
Name	Tenure	Party	Ruling Coalition
Rabi Ray	Dec 1989 - July 1991	Janata Dal	National Front
Shivraj Patil	July 1991 - May 1996	Cong	Cong
PA Sangma	May 1996 - Mar 1998	Cong	United Front
GMC Balayogi*	Mar 1998 - Oct 1999	TDP	NDA
	Oct 1999 - Mar 2002		
Manohar Joshi	May 2002 - June 2004	Shiv Sena	NDA
Somnath Chatterjee	June 2004 - June 2009	CPI(M)	UPA
Meira Kumar	June 2009 - June 2014	Cong	UPA
Sumitra Mahajan	June 2014 - June 2019	BJP	NDA
Omi Birla	June 2019 - June 2024	BJP	NDA

*Died in office

most important times when a Speaker's impartiality impacts the Opposition is when a motion of no-confidence is moved against the government. In 2018, when the YSRCP and TDP gave notices for a motion of no-confidence, then Speaker Sumitra Mahajan adjourned the House several times before admitting the motion and putting it to vote.

CASTING VOTE: Although it is rare that a Speaker is required to give her casting vote, it is a crucial function. According to Article 100 of the Constitution, which talks about voting in the Houses, the Chairman of Rajya Sabha or Speaker of Lok Sabha, or any person acting as such, "shall not vote in the first instance, but shall have an exercise a casting vote in the case of any equality of votes".

Conventionally, the Speaker votes in favour of the government.

Disqualification of members

For the Opposition, the realities of the power of the Speaker under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution are perhaps more significant than how the House is conducted.

The Tenth Schedule or the anti-defection law, introduced to the Constitution through the Fifty-Second (Amendment) Act, 1985, gives the Speaker of the House the power to disqualify legislators who 'defect' from a party. In the landmark case *Kihoto Hollohan versus Zachillhu* in 1992, the Supreme Court upheld the power vested in the Speaker and said that only the final order of the Speaker will be subject to judicial review.

Defections can alter numbers in the House and cause a government to fall. If the Speaker acts in a timely manner and disqualifies a member, the government's majority may not be published if the Speaker decides to expunge them.

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The salary of the Speaker is drawn from the Consolidated Fund of India unlike for other MPs, which flow from a statute voted on by the House itself.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB:GS 3-Economy

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Quality Council of India celebrates World Accreditation Day in more than 20 cities across India

Posted On: 10 JUN 2024 5:21PM by PIB Delhi

- Quality Council of India (QCI) celebrated World Accreditation Day today across more than 20 cities in India.
- The Quality Council of India, established in 1997 by the Government of India and the Indian industry, is the apex organisation in India responsible for establishing and operating the third-party national accreditation system, improving quality across sectors and advising the government and other stakeholders on all matters concerning quality.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB:GS 3-S&T

NITI Aayog

Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog unveils AIM – ICDK Water Challenge 4.0 and Innovations For You – SDG Entrepreneurs of India

Posted On: 10 JUN 2024 4:55PM by PIB Delhi

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog is Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was setup in 2016.
- Towards this end AIM has taken a holistic approach to ensure creation of a problem-solving innovative mindset in schools and creating an ecosystem of entrepreneurship in universities, research institutions, private and MSME sector.
- All the initiatives of AIM are currently monitored and managed systematically using real-time MIS systems and dynamic dashboards.
- AIM is also currently having its programs reviewed by third party agencies for ensuring continuous improvements.