

DAILY PT POINTERS

27th August, 2024



The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page-1

Amit Shah announces five new districts for Ladakh

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that five new districts – Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang – would be created in the Union Territory of Ladakh for “bolstering governance in every nook and cranny”. Ladakh now has two districts – Leh and Kargil – with autonomous hill development councils.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was a step towards better governance and the districts would “now receive more focused attention, bringing services and opportunities even closer to the people”.



Amit Shah

The decision comes days before the September 1-October 2 padayatra to Delhi planned by the Leh Apex Body (LAB), an influential civil society group. The LAB, along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been demanding Statehood since 2020.

Cherring Dorjay Lakruk, co-chairman, LAB told *The Hindu*, “There is no giving up on our march to Delhi. Our struggle will continue. The decision to create the new districts does not change our demand for a Sixth Schedule status.”

Echoing this, Sajjad Kargili of the KDA said, “Ladakh should be given an Assembly, the creation of seven districts validates the demand. If there is no Assembly and if it is only being done for bureaucratic control, then it should not be a reason to divert our demand for Sixth Schedule and statehood.”

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- Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that five new districts — Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang — would be created in the Union Territory of Ladakh for “bolstering governance in every nook and cranny”. Ladakh now has two districts — Leh and Kargil — with autonomous hill development councils.
- The special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution was revoked by the Parliament on August 5, 2019 and the former State was split into two Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The population of Ladakh is 2.74 lakh according to 2011 Census.

The Hindu –Governance(GSII)-Page 12

Education Ministry defines ‘literacy’, ‘full literacy’ in push for adult literacy

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

In a letter to all States, the Education Ministry has defined ‘literacy’, and what it means to achieve ‘full literacy,’ in light of a renewed push for adult literacy under the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), a five-year programme (2022-27) that aims to onboard one crore learners aged above 15 every year across all States and Union Territories.

Union School Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar, in the letter, has stated that literacy may be understood as the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, that is to identify, understand, interpret and create along with critical life skills such as digital and financial literacy. Full literacy (to be considered equivalent to 100%



New India Literacy Programme (NILP) aims to onboard 1 crore learners per year. GETTY IMAGES

literacy) will be achieving 95% literacy in a State or Union Territory.

Mr. Kumar further writes that a non-literate person may be considered as literate under the NILP, as per the aforementioned definition when he/she has been declared literate after taking the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT).

According to data ac-

cessed by *The Hindu*, in 2023, 39,94,563 adult learners appeared for FLNAT in March and September, out of which 36,17,303 were certified ‘literate’.

In 2024, FLNAT was conducted on March 17, in which 34,62,289 learners appeared.

However, only 29,52,385 (85.27%) were certified as literate. While the pass percentage in FLNAT hovered between 89.64% and 91.27% in 2023, in 2024 it has dropped lower to 85.27%.

In 2024-25, the Ministry has allocated a budget of ₹160 crore for NILP. According to the latest Union Budget document, only ₹76.41 crore was actually utilised towards the scheme in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, the allocation was hiked to ₹157 crore, but later brought down to ₹100 crore in the

revised estimates of the Union Budget.

Significant challenge

According to the 2011 Census, India faces a significant literacy challenge with 25.76 crore non-literate individuals in the age group of 15 years and above, comprising 9.08 crore males and 16.68 crore females.

Despite the progress made under the Saakshar Bharat programme, which certified 7.64 crore individuals as literate between 2009-10 and 2017-18, an estimated 18.12 crore adults in India remain non-literate. The letter says non-literate individuals face disadvantages in various aspects of life such as financial transactions, job applications, understanding of rights and participation in higher productivity sectors.

- the Education Ministry has defined ‘literacy’, and what it means to achieve ‘full literacy,’ in light of a renewed push for adult literacy under the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), a five-year programme (2022-27) that aims to onboard one crore learners aged above 15 every year across all States and Union Territories.
 - The scheme aims to cover a target of 5.00 crore non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above. The Scheme has five components: (i) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, (ii) Critical Life Skills, (iii) Vocational Skills Development, (iv) Basic Education and (v) Continuing Education.
- literacy may be understood as the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, that is to identify, understand, interpret and create along with critical life skills such as digital and financial literacy. Full literacy (to be considered equivalent to 100% literacy) will be achieving 95% literacy in a State or Union Territory.

Indian Express –IR (GSII)-Page 5

India, Singapore explore boosting ties on 'six pillars' at bilateral meet

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
SINGAPORE, AUGUST 26

SENIOR MINISTERS from India and Singapore held a "productive" round of discussions at the second multi-ministerial roundtable and explored how the two countries can boost bilateral cooperation in digital, skill development, sustainability, healthcare, connectivity and advanced manufacturing.

The four-member Indian delegation comprised Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

"During the meeting, the leaders emphasised ways of further #enhancing cooperation between India and Singapore in #emerging and #futuristic areas," India's Ministry of Finance said in a post on X.

At the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR), the four leaders, led by Sitharaman, were joined by their



Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, S Jaishankar, Piyush Goyal and Ashwini Vaishnaw during the second India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable, in Singapore. PTI

Singaporean counterparts and reviewed the progress from the first ISMR held in New Delhi in September 2022. The ISMR is being held here ahead of PM Narendra Modi's likely visit to the city-state next month.

Both sides deliberated upon the six pillars identified under ISMR, which include "digitalisation, skill development, sustain-

ability, healthcare and medicine, and advanced manufacturing and connectivity", according to the post. "The leaders also discussed plans for commemorating the 60th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore, alongside regional and global cooperation, including #ASEAN & #G20 developments," it said.

The four ministers also called on Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and PM Lawrence Wong. With President Tharman, the leaders discussed "boosting the India-Singapore Strategic Partnership by focusing on key areas like #digitalisation, #GreenInitiatives, and #SkillDevelopment," the Finance Ministry said in a post on X.

- **Second ministerial meeting : India, Singapore to identify new areas to elevate strategic ties**
- The main objectives of the second ISMR are to review the progress in bilateral collaboration since the first ISMR and explore new areas of collaboration particularly in sustainability, digitalisation, skills development, healthcare and medicine, advanced manufacturing and connectivity.

Indian Express-Space(GSIII)

ISRO finalises design of humanoid skull crucial to Gaganyaan mission next year

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, AUGUST 26

ISRO HAS finalised the design of the humanoid skull that would be sent into space for safety tests ahead of the country's maiden human space flight next year.

Designed at Thiruvananthapuram-based ISRO Inertial Systems Unit (ISU), the 800-gm, 200 mm x 220 mm skull will be made of a high-strength aluminium alloy to withstand pressure and vibrations. Covered in a prosthetic material, which will act as its skin, it will house all the face actuation mechanisms to mimic an actual human face.

The skull will be the nerve centre of Vyommित्रa (sanskrit for 'space friend'), a half-humanoid that will fly on an uncrewed mission into space before actual astronauts are sent as part of ISRO's Gaganyaan Mission.

The Vyommित्रa will resemble the upper part of the human body – its torso, arms, face and neck movable in different directions and equipped with sensors and instruments to



The 800 gm, 200 mm x 220 mm skull was designed at ISRO Inertial Systems Unit in Thiruvananthapuram. *Journal of Institution of Engineers, India*

carry out human-like functions. It will measure the likely impact of living in space on human beings.

"This half-humanoid simulates the anthropomorphic (human-like) features of the upper torso of a human body and will primarily demonstrate operations such as Crew Console related tasks... the skull is designed to withstand the vibrational loads experienced during the launch," IISU director Padma Kumar E S told *The Indian Express* in

an email reply.

"This configuration of the skull is part of the half-humanoid flying in Gaganyaan mission. Ground qualification testing is over. Flight system has been realised and acceptance testing is currently under progress," he said.

Scheduled for 2025, the Gaganyaan mission will be India's first attempt at sending humans into space. It will carry three Indian astronauts to about 400 km from the Earth's surface for three days. If the

mission is successful, India will become the fourth to send a human into space after Russia, US and China.

But before the main flight, ISRO has planned two uncrewed preparatory missions – Gaganyaan-1 (G1) and Gaganyaan-2 (G2). G1, scheduled for launch this December, will mainly test the safe re-entry of the spacecraft and its orientation upon its dive into the sea. The G2 mission will carry Vyommित्रa inside the human-rated pressurised crew module, where astronauts would be seated in the actual flight. The robot will be tasked with recording all parameters to study the impacts of the flight on humans.

Ahead of putting an actual human into space, several studies are done using humanoids. They collect vital data on the impacts of space travel on human bodies, enabling scientists to design the space capsule for a safe and comfortable flight. Robotic systems are often a part of the actual human space missions as well to assist astronauts in performing tasks that are either repetitive or dangerous.

- the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will send a humanoid robot, *Vyommित्रa*, into space to test spacecraft safety.
- The humanoid's skull, designed at ISRO's Thiruvananthapuram unit, weighs 800 grams and measures 200 mm x 220 mm, made from a high-strength aluminum alloy to endure pressure and vibration.
- Vyommित्रa will resemble the upper human body, featuring movable arms, face, and neck equipped with sensors to perform human-like functions and assess the impacts of space travel.

Do you know ?

The Gaganyaan mission, India's first attempt at sending humans into space, is scheduled for next year. But before that two uncrewed preparatory missions, Gaganyaan-1 (G1) and Gaganyaan-2 (G2), would be flown,

Indian Express-Economy(GSIII)-Page 9

UNIFIED LENDING INTERFACE

A platform like UPI to enable frictionless disbursement of credit; will soon be launched nationwide

THE RESERVE Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said that a nationwide launch of the Unified Lending Interface (ULI), which will happen in due course, will transform the lending space in the country just like Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transformed the retail payments ecosystem.

What is ULI?

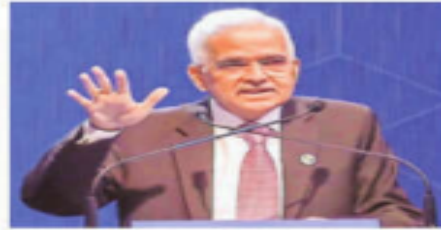
The RBI, last August, had started a tech platform for enabling frictionless credit. Das said on Monday that this will be called the Unified Lending Interface. The initiative is still in the pilot stage, he said.

ULI aims to bring efficiency in the lending process by reducing costs, and facilitating quicker disbursement and scalability.

How will ULI work?

For digital credit delivery, the data required for credit appraisal are currently available with different entities like Central and State governments, account aggregators, banks, credit information companies, and digital identity authorities. However, these data sets are in separate systems, creating hindrance in frictionless and timely delivery of rule-based lending.

This is what ULI will change. The RBI chief said that the platform will facilitate a seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including land records, from multiple data service providers to lenders. This will cut down the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers, and allow them to benefit from



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. PTI

financial and non-financial data that otherwise resided in disparate silos, ULI is expected to cater to large unmet demand for credit across sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers," Das said.

Why is this development significant?

In recent years, India has embraced the concept of digital public infrastructure which encourages banks, NBFCs, fintech companies and start-ups to create and provide innovative solutions in payments, credit, and other financial activities. ULI will be a major milestone in this process.

"The 'new trinity' of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India's digital infrastructure journey," Das said.

JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile) is a tool used by the government to transfer cash benefits directly to the bank account of beneficiaries.

UPI, launched by the National Pay-

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said that a nationwide launch of the Unified Lending Interface (ULI) will happen in due course. Similar to Unified Payment Interface (UPI), which has revolutionised the retail payment system in the country, ULI will transform the lending landscape.

- ULI platform will facilitate a seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders. It will cut down the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers.
- He said that the ULI architecture has common and standardised APIs (Application Programming Interface), designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from diverse sources.
- The platform will reduce the complexity of multiple technical integrations, and will enable borrowers to get the benefit of seamless delivery of credit, and quicker turnaround time without requiring extensive documentation.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-IR(GSII)

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

10th Round of India-Australia CECA Negotiations held on five tracks in Sydney

Posted On: 25 AUG 2024 9:40AM by PIB Delhi

10th Round of India-Australia CECA Negotiations was held from 19-22 August 2024 in Sydney in the areas of Goods, Services, Digital Trade, Government Procurement, Rules of Origin and Agri tech. Intense discussions were held on each of these tracks bringing in clarity and understanding for convergence in the remaining provisions. The 10th Round was held after a gap of around 5 months from the concluded 9th Round. However intersessional meetings were held between these two rounds to bring in convergence on all these tracks as well as under other remaining tracks.

- 10th Round of India-Australia CECA Negotiations was held from 19-22 August 2024 in Sydney in the areas of Goods, Services, Digital Trade, Government Procurement, Rules of Origin and Agri tech.
- Australia is an important trade and strategic partner of India. Both the countries are part of the 14 country Indo Pacific Economic Forum for Prosperity (IPEF) and Trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) which is expected to strengthen the supply chain resilience in the region.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Governance(GSII)

Cabinet

Cabinet approves Unified Pension Scheme

Posted On: 24 AUG 2024 8:33PM by PIB Delhi

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).
- The salient features of the UPS are:
- Assured pension: 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years. This pay is to be proportionate for lesser service period upto a minimum of 10 years of service.
- Assured family pension: @60% of pension of the employee immediately before her/his demise.
- Assured minimum pension: @10,000 per month on superannuation after minimum 10 years of service.
- Inflation indexation: on assured pension, on assured family pension and assured minimum pension

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Science and Tech(GSIII)

Cabinet

Cabinet approves the Department of Science and Technology scheme namely 'Vigyan Dhara'

Posted On: 24 AUG 2024 7:27PM by PIB Delhi

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved continuation of the three umbrella schemes, merged into a unified central sector scheme namely 'Vigyan Dhara' of Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- The scheme has three broad components:
- Science and Technology (S&T) Institutional and Human Capacity Building,
- Research and Development and
- Innovation, Technology Development and Deployment.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

AIR-Space(GSIII)

Japan On High Alert As Typhoon Shanshan Approaches



- The terms "hurricane" and "typhoon" are regional names for tropical cyclones. All tropical cyclones are alike in that they draw heat from warm water at the ocean's surface to power horizontal, rotating wind. Although similar in size, tropical cyclones have a different energy source than synoptic cyclones, which are storm systems that draw their energy from weather fronts and jet streams.
- Over the Atlantic and East Pacific, tropical cyclones are commonly called "hurricanes." The common term is "typhoon" for a tropical cyclone that forms in the West Pacific. Tropical cyclones are called just "cyclones" in the Indian Ocean and near Australia.