

# DAILY PT POINTERS

8th August, 2024



## The Hindu : \_GS 2/Governance–Page-1

### Bill removes powers of Waqf Board; non-Muslims and women on board

Vijaita Singh  
Ishita Mishra  
NEW DELHI



Kiren Rijju

With the Bill to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, set to be tabled in Parliament this week, the Centre proposes to strip the Waqf Board of its powers to declare a property as its own.

The Bill proposes the inclusion of two Muslim women and two non-Muslim members on the board, and inserts a new section to prevent the wrongful declaration of a property as “Waqf”. It also introduces the District Collector as an arbiter to decide if a property is a Waqf or government land. In the 1995 Act, such decisions are made by the Waqf Tribunal.

The Waqf comprises property or land donated by followers of Islam, and is managed by the members of the community. The Waqf Boards currently control

8.7 lakh properties spanning 9.4 lakh acres across India, with an estimated value of ₹1.2 lakh crore. Collectively, this makes the Waqf Boards the third largest landowner in India. The Waqf Act was last amended in 2013.

#### ‘Unacceptable changes’

The Bill has drawn sharp criticism from Muslim bodies and Opposition parties, which termed it an act to create societal divides. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has maintained that any change in the Waqf Act that alters the

nature of Wakf properties, or makes it easier for the government or any individual to usurp them, will not be acceptable.

The Bill, a copy of which was circulated among Lok Sabha members on Wednesday, proposes to rename the Act “Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act, 1995”. The Bill “omits Section 40 relating to the powers of Board to decide if a property is waqf property”.

“Any Government property identified or declared as waqf property, before or after the commencement of this Act, shall not be deemed to be a waqf property. If any question arises as to whether any such property is a government property, the same shall be referred to the Collector having jurisdiction who shall make such inquiry as he deems fit, and deter-

mine whether such property is a Government property or not and submit his report to the State Government,” the Bill says.

It says that no person shall create a Waqf unless he is the lawful owner of the property and competent to transfer or dedicate such property. Also, the creation of a *waqf-alal-aulad* (Waqf deed) must not result in the denial of the inheritance rights of heirs.

Another proposed amendment is that no Waqf can be created without the execution of a Waqf deed. In Islamic law, a Waqf dedication may be made either in writing, or orally.

Union Minister Kiren Rijju’s statement of objects and reasons for the amendment Bill said though the Waqf Act, 1995, had been enacted to provide for the better administration of *Auqaf*, it has not proved effective in this regard.

With the Bill to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, set to be tabled in Parliament this week, the Centre proposes to strip the Waqf Board of its powers to declare a property as its own.

- The Bill proposes the inclusion of two Muslim women and two non-Muslim members on the board, and inserts a new section to prevent the wrongful declaration of a property as “Waqf”.
- It also introduces the District Collector as an arbiter to decide if a property is a Waqf or government land. In the 1995 Act, such decisions are made by the Waqf Tribunal.

#### Do you know ?

- The Waqf comprises property or land donated by followers of Islam, and is managed by the members of the community.
- The Waqf Boards currently control 8.7 lakh properties spanning 9.4 lakh acres across India, with an estimated value of ₹1.2 lakh crore. Collectively, this makes the Waqf Boards the third largest landowner in India. The Waqf Act was last amended in 2013.

## The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 10

# Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill, amends provision on LTCG tax

Sitharaman rejects criticism from Opposition that the middle class is heavily taxed; she says Budget is aimed at promoting investment; protests erupt in House after govt. does not take up amendment against 18% GST on insurance premiums

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Finance Bill, 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday with an amendment relaxing a proposal for the long-term capital gains tax on real estate. It allows tax payers an option to switch to a new lower tax rate or stick to the old regime that had a higher rate with indexation benefit.

The amendment comes after a proposal to remove indexation benefit in calculation of long-term capital gains on sale of immovable properties in the Budget, 2024-25 had evoked criticism from various corners, including Opposition parties and tax professionals. The Budget had proposed a lower 12.5% rate of LTCG tax, down from 20%, while doing away with the indexation benefit.

With this amendment, individuals or Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who



**New regime:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government had eased tax compliance. PTI

bought houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5% without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20% tax.

The Finance Bill was passed by a voice vote in the Lok Sabha with a total of 45 official amendments.

Replying to the debate before the passage of the Bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman rejected

criticism from Opposition parties that the middle class was heavily taxed. She said that the Budget proposals were aimed at promoting investment and benefiting the middle class.

She said the Narendra Modi government had brought in a simplified taxation regime and eased compliance without drastically increasing taxes.

Among the various mea-

sures taken to help the middle class, Ms. Sitharaman mentioned the reduction in customs duty on various goods that would promote trade and investment and generate employment.

She also referred to the hike in tax exemption limit on long-term capital gains in listed equities and bonds to ₹1.25 lakh from ₹1 lakh, a move that she said would benefit those investing in the stock market.

The Finance Minister said that simplification of the tax regime was the primary objective of the Modi government, highlighting that 72% of those who had paid income tax had opted for the new regime while filing returns this year.

"We have made transformational changes in tax governance. In 2023, the tax slabs were significantly reduced. Again, this has been done this year," Ms. Sitharaman said, adding that the standard deduc-

tion for the salaried class had been increased.

On the Opposition's demand for removal of Goods and Services Tax on health and life insurance premiums, the Union Minister said that 75% of the GST collected went to the States.

"Prior to levying 18% GST on health insurance [premium], all States used to levy tax on insurance premiums. So when GST was rolled out, the tax automatically got subsumed into GST," she said.

Opposition MPs staged a walkout after a furore over the government not taking up an amendment in the Finance Bill to withdraw the 18% GST levy on medical and life insurance premiums.

The amendment had been moved by N.K. Premachandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The Finance Minister said any amendment in GST had to be approved by the GST Council.

- The Finance Bill, 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday with an amendment relaxing a proposal for the long-term capital gains tax on real estate. It allows tax payers an option to switch to a new lower tax rate or stick to the old regime that had a higher rate with indexation benefit.
- The amendment comes after a proposal to remove indexation benefit in calculation of long-term capital gains on sale of immovable properties in the Budget, 2024-25 had evoked criticism from various corners, including Opposition parties and tax professionals. The Budget had proposed a lower 12.5% rate of LTCG tax, down from 20%, while doing away with the indexation benefit.
- With this amendment, individuals or Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who bought houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5% without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20% tax.

The Hindu –Science and Tech(GSIII)-Page-14

## Chandrayaan-3 team, ex-IISc Director win top science awards

33 Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar awards will be given on National Space Day; 13 scientists to get Vigyan Shree award, 18 selected for Vigan Yuva award

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

The Union government has announced the first set of Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, or national awards for scientists, ever since it controversially cut down the number of such awards in 2022. Thirty-three of these awards, slated to be given on August 23, National Space Day to mark Chandrayaan-3's moon landing, were announced on Wednesday.

### Overhaul of awards

Following the overhaul of the scientific awards scheme, the Ministry of Science and Technology in January this year had notified four categories of awards, comprising a maximum of 56, for scientists. These are up to three Vigan Ratna to recognise life-time achievements and contributions made in a given field of science and technology, up to 25 Vigan Shri to recognise distinguished contributions, up to 25 Vigan Yuva; Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar award to recognise and encourage young scientists



**Massive effort:** Some members of the jubilant Chandrayaan-3 team with ISRO Chairman S. Somanath. FILE PHOTO

who made an exceptional contribution, and up to three Vigan Team awards to recognise a team of three or more scientists/researchers/innovators who have made an exceptional contribution working in a team.

Noted biochemist and former Director of the Indian Institute of Science, G Padmanabhan, was announced as the winner of the Vigan Ratna. Thirteen scientists spanning a diverse set of fields from physics, chemistry, mathe-

matics, atomic energy, biological sciences, earth sciences were awarded the Vigan Shri and 18 scientists were nominated for the Vigan Yuva.

The Vigan team award went to the ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 team. The awards are expected to be given at a ceremony on August 23 here. The awards this year were decided by a nomination process on a portal maintained by the Union Home Ministry that is a repository of a range of national awards.

## Scientists from IIT Bombay, BHU, TIFR among Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024 winners

The award ceremony will be held at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre on August 23, the first National Space Day. Every year, the Government of India honours 15 scientists from the fields of science, technology, and innovation. Awards are presented in four categories: Vigan Ratna, Vigan Shri, Vigan Yuva, and Vigan Team.

- The objective of the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) is to recognize the notable and inspiring contribution made by the scientists, technologists, and innovators individually or in teams in various fields of science, technology and technology led innovation.
- The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar shall be one of the highest recognitions in the field of science, technology, and innovation in India.
- People of Indian Origin staying abroad with exceptional contributions benefiting the Indian communities or society shall also be eligible for the awards

## Indian Express –Environment (GSIII)-Page 12

# Chhattisgarh to get new tiger reserve amid dwindling big cat population

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU  
RAIPUR, AUGUST 7

WITH ITS tiger population plunging in recent years, Chhattisgarh on Wednesday cleared a long-pending proposal to notify a new tiger reserve – the third largest in the country.

The Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve, which integrates an existing national park with a wildlife sanctuary, is Chhattisgarh's fourth reserve for the big cats. It spans 2,829.387 square kilometres across four northern districts of the state.

The decision comes after the Chhattisgarh High Court, while hearing a PIL on July 15, granted four weeks to the state govern-

ment to clear its stand on declaring that area a tiger reserve.

Chhattisgarh's tiger population fell from 46 in 2014 to 17 in 2022, according to a National Tiger Conservation Authority report released in July 2023.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had flagged this decline in a 2023 statement: "Some states, including Mizoram, Nagaland, Jharkhand, Goa, Chhattisgarh and Arunachal Pradesh have reported disquieting trends with small tiger populations."

On Wednesday, the state cabinet merged the regions of the Guru Ghasidas National Park and the Tamor Pingla Sanctuary, located in the districts of Koriya,

**The reserve spans 2,829.387 sq km across four northern districts of the state**

Balrampur, Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, and Surajpur to create the new reserve.

"The formation of this tiger reserve will foster ecotourism in the state and create employment opportunities for villagers residing in the core and buffer zones, as guides, tourist vehicle operators, and resort managers. Additionally, the National Project Tiger Authority will provide an extra budget for the reserve's operations, which

will facilitate new livelihood development projects in the surrounding villages," said a government statement.

The state also authorised its Department of Forest and Climate Change to proceed with the formalities regarding its establishment of the reserve.

In 2019, wildlife activist Ajay Dubey had filed the PIL in the high court flagging the fall in the population of the big cats in the state. The PIL alleged inaction by the government in notifying and constituting the reserve since 2012 despite approval from the National Tiger Conservation Authority as well as the Union Environment Ministry.

On Wednesday, Dubey told *The Indian Express*: "I welcome

this decision. It will strengthen wildlife conservation in Chhattisgarh, especially tiger protection."

A government official, requesting anonymity, said: "Guru Ghasidas National Park was made a tiger reserve in 2021, but it could not be notified due to opposition. Due to many mines in this area, the notification to declare the National Park as a tiger reserve was stuck during the previous government."

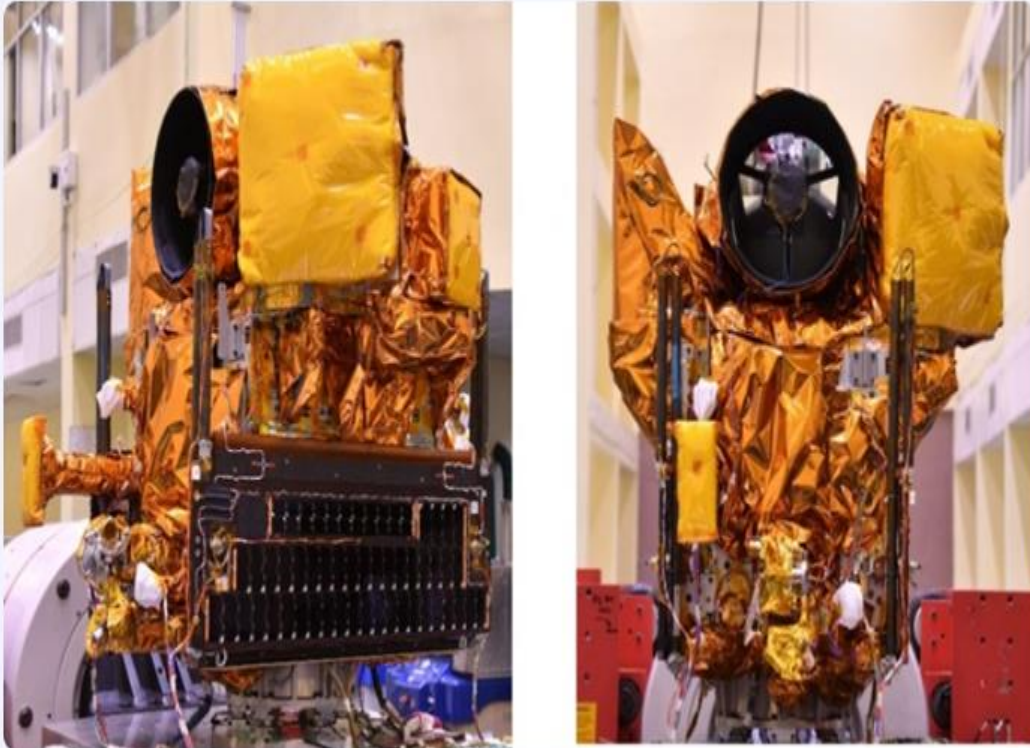
Andhra Pradesh's Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve is the country's largest tiger reserve, covering 3,296.31 sq km. Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam is the second largest with an area of 2,837.1 sq km. Both have 58 tigers.

- Chhattisgarh cleared a long-pending proposal to notify a new tiger reserve – the third largest in the country.
- The Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve, which integrates an existing national park with a wildlife sanctuary, is **Chhattisgarh's fourth reserve** for the big cats. It spans 2,829 square kilometres across four northern districts of the state
  - Currently, Chhattisgarh has three tiger reserves — Indravati in Bijapur district, Udanti-Sitanadi in Gariaband and Achanakmar in Mungeli.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air –Space(GSIII)

### ISRO To Launch Earth Observation Satellite Through SSLV This Independence Day



The Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO will celebrate this Independence Day in space by launching an Earth

- The Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO will celebrate this Independence Day in space by launching an Earth Observation Satellite into orbit.
- The Small Satellite Launch Vehicle will be used to launch the satellite on August 15th at 9.17 am from Sriharikota. The Small launch vehicle developed by ISRO can be produced at low cost, has low turnaround time, can accommodate multiple micro satellites and can be launched on demand in less time with minimal infrastructure requirements. It can carry a 500 kg satellite to a 500 kms orbit. Once the demonstration flight is successful, it will be transferred to the private sector for production.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air–History(GSI)

### Cultural Programmes, Photo Exhibition Marks Death Anniversary Of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore



- The Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7th, 1861, in Jorasanko Thakurbari, Kolkata. He was a renowned Bengali poet and writer. Tagore was the youngest member of his affluent family and he came from an affluent family. Tagore had a profound desire for exploration and he was often referred to as the Bard of Bengal or Gurudev.
- Tagore's contribution to the field of art and literature is unparalleled. He achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for his poetry collection, "Geetanjali".
- Apart from being a poet and writer, he was an influential artist and musician. He founded Viswa Bharti University which is known as Shantiniketan.
- He wrote the National Anthems of **India and Bangladesh**.