

DAILY PT POINTERS

19 September,
2024



The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 1

Simultaneous polls plan gets Union Cabinet nod

Govt. to form implementation group to hold consultation; PM calls proposal an 'important step' towards making democracy 'participative', Congress terms it impractical, against Constitution

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday accepted the recommendations of a high-level committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind which had proposed simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and Assemblies as the first step, and municipal and panchayat polls within 100 days of the general election in the next phase.

"This is an important step towards making our democracy even more vibrant and participative," Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a strong votary of simultaneous polls, said in a post on X.

Calling it a giant stride towards electoral reforms, Home Minister Amit Shah,



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressing a press conference on simultaneous elections, in New Delhi on Wednesday. Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan is at right. ANI

in a post on X, said, "This reflects Modi Ji's iron will to bolster our democracy through clean and financially efficient elections and accelerate economic growth through more productive allocation of resources."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, however,

dismissed the idea as "impractical".

"This is against the Constitution, this is contrary to democracy, this is against federalism. The country will never accept this," he said.

Announcing the Union Cabinet's approval to the proposal of simultaneous

It will destroy federalism, says Opposition

NEW DELHI

Opposition parties criticised the proposal for simultaneous elections, claiming that it will destroy federalism and is "impractical". They asked how the government would deal with situations when a ruling party loses majority in a State or at the Centre. » PAGE 12

elections at a media briefing, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said an implementation group would be formed to take forward the recommendations of the Kovind panel.

CONTINUED ON
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- The Union Cabinet approved a high-level committee's recommendation on implementing simultaneous national, state and local polls across India.
- The idea of ONOE centres around the concept of synchronising the timing of Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections across all States to reduce the frequency of polls throughout the country.
- During the first four general election cycles in 1952, 1957, 1962 and 1967, the elections to the Lok Sabha and State legislative assemblies were held simultaneously. However, due to the subsequent premature dissolution of the Lok Sabha on seven occasions and the premature dissolution of legislative assemblies on various occasions, the elections to the Lok Sabha and various State assemblies are held at different times. The idea of simultaneous elections has been mooted in the past by the Election Commission of India (1982) and the Law Commission (1999).

The Hindu –IR(GSII)-Page 1

Indus waters: India to freeze talks with Pak.

Jacob Koshy
Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

There will be no more meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) till the governments of India and Pakistan meet and discuss the renegotiation of the 64-year-old Indus Water Treaty, a highly placed official told *The Hindu*.

The last meeting was in Delhi in May 2022. Since January 2023, India has written four times to Pakistan to initiate talks on revising the treaty but not received a “satisfactory response”, according to sources.

The PIC is the most consequential product of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT),

signed in 1960 to manage the sharing of six Himalayan rivers between India and Pakistan. Commissioners of both countries are mandated to meet every year, and sometimes have met multiple times in a year, to discuss and resolve differences on the sharing of river water and construction of hydel projects.

Despite wars and disputes between India and Pakistan, and the occasional stalling of the meetings, the PIC has been a permanent fixture.

However, with India’s call to renegotiate the IWT in January 2023, the PIC risks oblivion.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

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Do you know ?

Under the treaty, water from the Beas, Ravi and Sutlej, or the ‘eastern rivers’, were allocated to India and that from the three western rivers — Chenab, Indus and Jhelum — to Pakistan. The treaty allows India to use the western rivers for limited irrigation purposes and power generation, among other ‘non-consumptive’ uses.

The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page 1

₹5 lakh each to transform tribal houses into homestays

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a package that will provide up to ₹5 lakh each to tribal households and villages across the country, to turn their homes into tourist homestays or to build new ones under the Tourism Ministry's Swadesh Darshan scheme. This is meant to "tap the tourist potential of tribal areas" and to "provide alternative livelihood", an official statement said.

This is one of the 25 interventions planned under the Pradhan Mantri-Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA), an umbrella package to implement existing schemes in 63,000 Scheduled Tribe-majority villages. For instance, the Swadesh Darshan scheme



A homestay at Dzuleke village near Nagaland's Kohima. FILE PHOTO

was launched a decade ago, in 2014-15, though the tribal homestay proposal may be a new element.

Outlay of ₹79,156 cr.

The PMJUGA package is aimed at ensuring the saturation of basic schemes in tribal villages, with interventions to be implemented by 17 Ministries, and funding coming from each Ministry's allocated share

in the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes. Together, this will involve an outlay of ₹79,156 crore, to be spent over five years, with a Central share of ₹56,333 crore, and a States' share of ₹22,823 crore.

Significantly, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, headed to polls this year, account for over 18% of the country's tribal population.

The PMJUGA intends to

bring sustainable agricultural practices to all Forest Rights Act (FRA) *patta* holders "to enable them for maintenance and conservation of forest", the official statement said.

As of June 2024, more than 24 lakh FRA titles have been granted to people and communities from Scheduled Tribes (ST) and other traditional forest-dwelling groups, covering over 1.9 crore acres of forest land across the country. However, of the 50.5 lakh claims filed under the FRA, 34.83% have been rejected and 15.9% remain pending. The Centre hopes to "catalyse" pending claims and expedite recognition and securing of forest rights.

The new package also aims to give an impetus to existing development schemes to build 20 lakh

homes for ST families, lay 25,000 km of roads connecting ST-majority villages, and bring piped water to every eligible village, with a focus on 5,000 hamlets with less than 20 households each. It also plans to electrify around 2.35 lakh households and unconnected public institutions, provide 25 lakh LPG connections, bring discrimination-free broadband connectivity to 5,000 tribal villages under the BharatNet project, and set up 100 tribal multipurpose marketing centres.

The tourism section of the scheme aims to create five to 10 homestays in each target tribal village where there is a "tourist potential", with an overall goal of setting up 1,000 such homestays.

RELATED REPORTS

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- For instance, the Swadesh Darshan scheme was launched a decade ago, in 2014-15, though the tribal homestay proposal may be a new element.

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The Hindu-History(GSI)-Page4

Madras High Court junks plea to declare Tamil saint-poet's birthday on *Vaikasi Anusham*

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court has refused to declare the day of *Anusham* star in the Tamil month of *Vaikasi* as the birthday of Tiruvalluvar, who is believed to have penned *Tirukkural*, a highly celebrated compendium of 1,330 couplets containing life lessons.

Justice M. Dhandapani also refused to issue a direction to the Tamil Nadu government to shift the annual celebration of 'Tiruvalluvar day' from the second day of Tamil month *Thai*, as it is being followed now, to the *Vaikasi Anusha Natchathiram* day.

The judge dismissed a writ petition filed in 2021 by *Samy Thiagarajan*, the president of Tiruvalluvar Tirunatkazhagam.

The petitioner had claimed to be a Tamil pro-



Statue of saint-poet Tiruvalluvar.

fessor with 36 years of teaching experience and a doctorate for his research on *Tirukkural*.

He stated that a temple for Tiruvalluvar was in existence at Mylapore in Chennai and that it was around 600 years old. It was under the control of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments department and it celebrates the birth anniversary of

the saint-poet on *Vaikasi Anusham* day, he said.

The petitioner said that even Colombo-based Tamil scholar K.P. Ratnam, who founded Tamil Marai Kazhagam, had spread the message worldwide that the birth anniversary of Tiruvalluvar must be celebrated only on *Vaikasi Anusham*.

A Government Order issued on March 18, 1966, after the conclusion of the first Tiruvalluvar conference, had ordered that 'Tiruvalluvar day' would be celebrated on June 2, 1966, which was a *Vaikasi Anusham* day. Subsequently, it was shifted to the second day of *Thai*, the litigant said.

Advocate General P.S. Raman told the court that the government celebrated 'Tiruvalluvar day' only to celebrate the literary works of the saint-poet.

- The Madras High Court has refused to declare the day of *Anusham* star in the Tamil month of *Vaikasi* as the birthday of Tiruvalluvar, who is believed to have penned *Tirukkural*, a highly celebrated compendium of 1,330 couplets containing life lessons.
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The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page14

Govt. to fence Myanmar border at ₹31,000 crore

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government has approved ₹31,000 crore to fence the Myanmar border, a senior Home Ministry official said on Wednesday.

The 1,643-km Myanmar border runs along the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. On Tuesday, Home Minister Amit Shah said fencing had been completed on 30 km of the border, which, he termed the

- The Union government has approved ₹31,000 crore to fence the Myanmar border.
- The 1,643-km Myanmar border runs along the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. On Tuesday, Home Minister Amit Shah said fencing had been completed on 30 km of the border, which, he termed the root cause of the ethnic violence in Manipur.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security had, in principle, approved the construction of border fencing and roads along the 1,643-km International Border between India and Myanmar at an approximate cost of ₹31,000 crore, the official said.
- About 10 km of fencing has already been completed near Moreh and work is under way to fence another 21 km in other areas of Manipur.
- The Home Ministry earlier this year scrapped the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the Myanmar border which allows people residing close to the border to venture 16 km into each other's territory without any documents.

The Hindu-Space(GSIII)-Page14

Chandrayaan-4, Venus orbiter get approval from Union Cabinet

Gaganyaan expansion project also gets nod; next lunar project plans to bring moon rocks to earth; space docking experiment later this year

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

In a boost to the space programme, the Union government on Wednesday approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission to bring moon rocks to earth, send a spacecraft to orbit Venus and expand the Gaganyaan project to build an Indian space station.

The Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also approved a proposal of the Department of Space to build a next-generation launch vehicle capable of placing heavier payload in orbits, which could also be key to achieving the targets of setting up a space station and landing an Indian astronaut on the moon.

"Great news for the space sector! The Union Cabinet has approved the first step towards the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), expanding the Gaganyaan programme," Mr. Modi said in a post on X. "This landmark decision brings us closer to a self-



Cutting edge: A model of the Gaganyaan crew module at the Bengaluru Space Expo 2024 on Wednesday. K. MURALIKUMAR

2035 and a crewed lunar mission by 2040," he said.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the government had allocated ₹2,104 crore for the Chandrayaan-4 mission.

"A natural successor to Chandrayaan-3 is the demonstration of the ability to collect lunar samples and return them safely back to earth," ISRO Chairman S. Somanath said. Chandrayaan-4 will involve multiple launches, and the premier space agency is set

experiment later this year to develop its capabilities for the challenging endeavour.

The Cabinet approved ₹1,236 crore for the Venus Orbiter Mission, which is expected to be launched in March 2028. This will be India's second interplanetary mission after the Mars Orbiter Mission, launched on November 5, 2013. The Cabinet also gave its nod to an additional funding of ₹11,170 crore to the Gaganyaan programme, which already has a sanctioned

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- This landmark decision brings us closer to a self-sustained space station by 2035 and a crewed lunar mission by 2040," the government had allocated ₹2,104 crore for the Chandrayaan-4 mission.
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The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page 14

PM-AASHA schemes to continue with additions: Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the continuation of schemes of the Pradhan Mantri Anna-data Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA).

The Centre said the schemes under PM-AASHA will ensure remunerative prices to farmers and control price volatility of essential commodities to benefit consumers.



The schemes under PM-AASHA will ensure remunerative prices

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- the schemes under PM-AASHA will ensure remunerative prices to farmers and control price volatility of essential commodities to benefit consumers.
- The Cabinet also fixed the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for the upcoming rabi season on phosphatic and potassic (P and K) fertilisers..
- The total financial outgo for PM-AASHA will be ₹35,000 crore during the 15th Finance Commission cycle up to 2025-26.
- The Centre has converged the Price Support Scheme (PSS) and Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) schemes in PM-AASHA.
- PM-AASHA will now have the components of PSS, PSF and the Price Deficit Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Market Intervention Scheme (MIS),”.

Indian Express-Environment(GSIII)-Page 9

India could produce up to 9.2 lakh Terawatt hr from blue renewable energy sources: INCOIS

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 18

INDIAN OCEANOGRAPHERS have mapped sites along India's coastline having potential to generate energy from blue renewable sources like tidal waves and currents.

Researchers at Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) have developed an Integrated Ocean Energy Atlas, which was launched recently via video conferencing by M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences.

The atlas has provided estimated values of renewable energy which can be generated from either individual or by integrated blue renewable sources from potential sites along the coast. The mapping was done for sites with a resolution of 5km x 5km located along the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which covers up to 220 km from the coast.

According to estimates, the Indian EEZ holds potential to generate about 9.2 lakh Terawatt hour (TWh) from multiple blue renewable energy sources.

Speaking about the need for such an atlas, T Srinivasa Kumar, director, INCOIS, said, "The off-

shore renewable energy sources like sun, wind, tides, etc. are not only important but have remained largely untapped. If we are able to use them, it will significantly aid in the energy transition towards a blue economy."

In order to tap these blue renewables, the first step is to know what scope each of these sources – sun, tides, winds, waves, salinity gradient, currents and ocean thermals across the coastline and the islands offer.

To understand it, researchers performed an assessment of potential energy generation based on past 20-30 years of data, obtained from weather models, in-

situ (on-site) and satellites. "This is an important product and a step towards achieving a net zero goal. The atlas will help understand available energy potential sites," said Ravichandran.

This is a first-of-its-kind atlas offering integrated and individual assessment of blue energy reserves across India's EEZ. "This will be useful for industries working in renewable energy sector for planning and decision-making," TM Balakrishnan Nair, head, Ocean Modelling, Applied Research and Services at INCOIS, said.

Anjali Marar is a science communicator at Raman Research Institute

- Researchers at the Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) have developed the Integrated Ocean Energy Atlas, which maps sites along India's coastline with the potential to generate energy from blue renewable sources like tidal waves and currents.
- It provides estimated values of renewable energy that can be generated from either individual or integrated blue renewable sources at potential sites along the coast.
- According to the estimates, the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) holds the potential to generate about 9.2 lakh terawatt hours (TWh) from multiple blue renewable energy sources.
- This is a first-of-its-kind atlas in the world offering an integrated and individual assessment of blue energy reserves across India's EEZ.

Indian Express-Governance(GSII)-Page 18

As SC hears a case on UP madrasa law, a profile of these institutions

ASADREHMAN

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 18

THE NATIONAL Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has told the Supreme Court that education imparted in madrasas “is not comprehensive and is therefore against the provisions of Right to Education Act”, and that textbooks in these institutions teach about the “supremacy of Islam”.

The NCPCR made its submission on September 11 in a clutch of appeals against an Allahabad High Court order of March 22 that had declared the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 “unconstitutional” on the ground that it violated “the principle of secularism” and fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution.

A Bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Subhash Vidyarthi directed the state government to “take steps forthwith for accommodating the madrasa students in regular

schools” recognised under the UP primary and high school and intermediate education boards.

The UP government had submitted “that no doubt the Madrasa Board is providing religious education and instructions to students, but the state has sufficient powers to impart such education under the Constitution and is rightly permitting such education”.

On April 5, a Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud stayed the High Court’s order.

Madrasas in history

Madrasa is an Arabic word for an educational institution. In the early centuries of Islam, mosques served also as places of education, but from the 10th century onward, madrasas came to acquire a distinct identity as institutions of religious and secular learning in the Islamic world.

The earliest evidence of madrasas comes from Khorasan and Transoxania, corresponding to modern eastern and northern Iran,

central Asia, and Afghanistan. The bigger madrasas also had facilities for housing students, especially those from poor backgrounds.

Largest number in UP

As of 2018-19, there were 24,010 madrasas in India, 19,132 of which were recognised madrasas, and the remaining 4,878 were unrecognised, then Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi told Rajya Sabha on February 3, 2020.

Recognised madrasas come under the state boards for madrasa education; the unrecognised ones follow the curriculum prescribed by the bigger seminaries such as the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama (Lucknow) and Darul Uloom Deoband.

As many as 60% of the country’s madrasas were in Uttar Pradesh – 11,621 recognised, and 2,907 unrecognised madrasas. The sec-

ond highest number of madrasas were in Rajasthan – 2,464 recognised, and 29 unrecognised madrasas, according to statewide data presented by Naqvi.

Several states and Union Territories, including Delhi, Assam, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana had no recognised madrasas, the data showed.

Two broad categories

There are two categories of madrasas in India – Madrasa Darse Nizami, which are run as public charities, and are not bound to follow the school education curriculum of the state; and the Madrasa Darse Aliya, which are affiliated to the state’s madrasa education board (such as the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education).

More than 20 states have their own madrasa boards. State madrasa boards are governed by the state government con-

cerned; teachers and other officials at recognised madrasas are appointed by the state government.

Some 1.69 lakh students sat for the UP madrasa education board examinations – equivalent to Class 10 and Class 12 – in 2023. UP and some other states also have a separate Sanskrit board.

NCERT, state curricula

Education is similar to school and higher education. Madrasa students study to be Maulvi (equivalent to Class 10), Alim (equivalent to Class 12), Kamil (Bachelor’s degree), and Fazil (Master’s).

The medium of education in the charitable Madrasa Darse Nizami is Arabic, Urdu, and Persian. The Madrasa Darse Aliya use either textbooks published by the state textbook corporation or agency, or the curriculum and textbooks of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Most madrasa boards in the country now follow the NCERT curriculum.

Mathematics, Science, Hindi, English, and Sociology are compulsory subjects. There is also an optional paper, in which students have the choice of studying Sanskrit or Demyiat (including the Quran and other religious teachings). Hindu religious scriptures and other religious teachings are taught in the Sanskrit optional paper.

Funded by state govts

The bulk of the funding for madrasas comes from the respective state governments. The central government has a Scheme for Providing Education to Madrasas/Minorities (SPEMM), under which financial assistance is provided to madrasas and minority institutions across the country.

There are two sub-schemes under SPEMM – a Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPOEM) and Infrastructure Development of Minority Institutes (DMI). SPOEM was transferred from the Ministry of Minority Affairs to the Ministry of Education in April 2021.

- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has told the Supreme Court that education imparted in madrasas “is not comprehensive and is therefore against the provisions of Right to Education Act”, and that textbooks in these institutions teach about the “supremacy of Islam”.
- Madrasa is an Arabic word for an educational institution. In the early centuries of Islam, mosques served also as places of education, but from the 10th century onward, madrasas came to acquire a distinct identity as institutions of religious and secular learning in the Islamic world. There are two categories of madrasas in India — Madrasa Darse Nizami, which are run as public charities, and are not bound to follow the school education curriculum of the state; and the Madrasa Darse Aliya, which are affiliated to the state’s madrasa education board (such as the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education).

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Science and Tech(GSIII)

Cabinet

Cabinet approves 'Bio-RIDE' scheme to support cutting edge research and development in Biotechnology

Posted On: 18 SEP 2024 3:27PM by PIB Delhi

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, approved continuation of the two umbrella schemes of Department of Biotechnology (DBT), merged as one scheme- 'Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (Bio-RIDE)' with a new component namely Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry.
- The scheme has three broad components:
 - Biotechnology Research and Development (R&D);
 - Industrial & Entrepreneurship Development (I&ED)
 - Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry
- Bio-RIDE scheme is designed to foster innovation, promote bio-entrepreneurship, and strengthen India's position as a global leader in biomanufacturing and biotechnology. It aims to accelerate research, enhance product development, and bridge the gap between academic research and industrial applications.

PIB-Governance(GSII)

Cabinet

Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan

Mission Aims at Saturation of more than 63,000 tribal majority villages and tribal villages in Aspirational Districts with budget of Rs. 79,156 crore

Posted On: 18 SEP 2024 3:20PM by PIB Delhi

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan with total outlay of Rs.79,156 crore (Central Share: Rs.56,333 crore and State Share: Rs. 22,823 crore) for improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities, by adopting saturation coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts.
- This will cover around 63,000 villages benefitting more than 5 crore tribal people as announced in the Budget Speech 2024-25. It will cover 549 districts and 2,740 blocks spread across all tribal majority villages across 30 States / UTs.

The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan envisions *saturation of critical gaps in social infrastructure, health, education, livelihood*, through different schemes of Govt of India by convergence and outreach and ensure holistic and sustainable development of tribal areas and communities based on learnings and success of PMJANMAN (Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan). The Mission comprises of 25 interventions which will be