

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 1

SC overrules 1967 verdict against AMU's minority tag

Recognition by law won't annul minority status, says seven-judge Bench of SC in 4:3 majority judgment; court returns case to a regular Bench to examine the question of AMU's minority status

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

An educational institution established by a minority community will not lose its identity once it is recognised through a statute, the Supreme Court declared on Friday in a 4:3 majority judgment by a seven-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud.

The majority judgment authored by the Chief Justice was based on petitions seeking minority status for the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). Chief Justice Chandrachud held that an institution established by a minority community was indeed a minority educational institution. But the



Seeking clarity: The court's judgment was based on petitions seeking minority status for the Aligarh Muslim University. FILE PHOTO

preserve and retain their cultural fabric, he said.

Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta, and S.C. Sharma dissented in separate opinions.

The court returned the case to the regular Bench to examine the question of

challenged the judgment in the 1967 case of *S. Azeez Basha versus Union of India*, which had held that AMU was a Central university and cannot be considered a minority institution. The seven-judge Bench overruled the 1967

AMU celebrates verdict, awaits expert opinion

GHAZIABAD

It was all celebration at AMU after the Supreme Court's verdict on its minority status, with Vice-Chancellor Prof. Naima Khatoun saying, "We humbly accept the judgment of the Constitution Bench and are discussing the details with our legal experts." » PAGE 10

ter educational institutions not established by them, and cannot claim protection under Article 30(1). Article 30(1) upholds the right of religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

- The Supreme Court ruled that an educational institution established by a minority community does not lose its minority identity once recognized by statute.
- The case involved petitions seeking recognition of AMU's minority status, which had been contested after a 1967 ruling (S. Azeez Basha case) that had declared AMU a Central university and not a minority institution.
- The judgment emphasized that the right to administer a minority institution, as guaranteed by Article 30(1), also extends to secular education, and state regulation should not undermine the institution's minority character.

The Hindu-Environment(GSIII)-Page 7

'Tiger population triples in Manas national park'

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The tiger population in western Assam's Manas National Park, a major wildlife preserve stretching into Bhutan, tripled from 2011 to 2019, a new study has said.

The report published in the latest issue of the *Journal of Biological Conservation* attributed this turn around in a park that suf-

fered from armed conflict to increased funding, improved protection infrastructure, and a larger staff.

The study said the growth in the Manas was supported by tourism revenue.

The findings indicated that collaborative efforts from local communities, government, and conservation agencies can lead to successful species recovery in post-conflict scena-

rios. The report said the tiger populations approach their carrying capacity," the report said.

Dipankar Lahkar of Aaranyak, an Assam-based biodiversity conservation organisation, is the lead author of the report.

According to the study, the tiger population (adults/100 km²) density

was 1.06 in 2011-12 to 3.64 in 2018-19 and has a high potential to grow to 8 or more. It added that the increasing trend could see the number of tigers in the park double by 2023 if conservation measures are in place and effective.

In 2021, a total of 44 adult tigers were photographed in Manas, one of Assam's two tiger reserves designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The

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- The study said the growth in the Manas was supported by tourism revenue.
- The findings indicated that collaborative efforts from local communities, government, and conservation agencies can lead to successful species recovery in post-conflict scenarios. "However, challenges like poaching and habitat loss persist, emphasising the need for continuous management focus as tiger populations approach their carrying capacity,

The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)-Page 7

Drones to emerge as a game changer in the fisheries sector, says Union Minister

They are set to address many critical challenges with precision and efficiency, says George Kurian; will aid in managing aquaculture farms, monitoring fish markets, assessing infrastructure damage'

The Hindu Bureau
Kochi

Drones will emerge as a game changer in the fisheries sector, addressing several critical challenges with precision and efficiency, Union Minister of State for Fisheries and Minority Affairs George Kurian said here on Friday.

He was inaugurating an awareness workshop and demonstration of drone applications in the fisheries sector at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.

"Drones play a pivotal role in managing aquaculture farms, monitoring fish markets, and assessing damage to fisheries infrastructure, particularly during natural disasters, when rescue operations are essential. On their part, underwater drones help closely



Demonstration of transportation of fish using a drone near the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Kochi on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

monitor fish behaviour in natural habitats, to detect signs of distress like erratic swimming patterns and also provide real-time data that strengthen sustainable fisheries management," he said.

The event saw live demonstration of drone applications in fisheries, including transportation of fish from the farm

Centre to develop 100 climate-resilient coastal fishermen villages across the country

dispensing aquafeeds and rescue operation.

Succour for fishers

The Minister said the Centre would develop 100 climate-resilient coastal fishermen villages across the country, to help fisher communities who encounter climate-change challenges, by allocating ₹2 crore per village under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana. This would help ready common facilities like fish-drying yards, processing centres, fish markets, and emergency rescue facilities, while promoting climate-resilient practices like seaweed cultivation

artificial reefs, and green fuel initiatives.

The Union Department of Fisheries would install transponders in about one lakh marine fishing vessels this year at an estimate of ₹364 crore. This would provide a two-way communication system enabling real-time tracking of fishing vessels and help fishermen to send short messages using Android mobile phones while fishing up to 200 nautical miles from the coast.

The system would also provide weather alerts to the fishermen, including cyclone warning. The Indian Space Research Organisation developed this technology indigenously using the GSAT 6 satellite.

Information related to potential fishing zones too would be made available to the fisherfolk on their cell phones in regional languages, he said.

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The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 12

Centre announces successful trial run of new pension system

THE HINDU BUREAU

NEW DELHI

The pilot run of the proposed Centralised Pension Payments System (CPPS) under the employees' pension scheme (EPS) of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is successful, the Union Labour Ministry said on Friday. Pension worth more than ₹11 crore was disbursed to 49,000 EPS pensioners of Jammu, Srinagar and Karnal Regions for October, 2024, under the new system.

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- “The approval of the Centralized Pension Payment System (CPPS) marks a significant milestone in modernization of the EPFO. By enabling pensioners to receive their pension from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country, this initiative addresses the long-standing challenges faced by pensioners and ensures a seamless and efficient disbursement mechanism.

Indian Express – Economy(GSIII)-Page 17

Debroy committee charted the Railways' path towards competitiveness, but most recommendations still work-in-progress

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 8

THE LANDMARK report of the 2015 expert committee on Railway Reforms, headed by the late economist Bibek Debroy, did clear the decks for a complete overhaul of the national transporter to achieve economic viability in operational terms and recover its loss of competitiveness in the transportation market. While some of the recommendations have been taken on board: including the phasing out of the separate Rail Budget, the redesignation of the Chairman of Railway Board as CEO and a plan to accord more powers to General Managers (GMs) and Divisional General Managers (DRMs) to take decisions "independently", the overarching recommendation on "liberalisation" of Indian Railways has not been taken on board yet.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, Electronics & Information Technology, told *The Indian Express* that the government has taken the report seriously and implemented most of the important recommendations, especially the empower-

ment in railways, which is reflected in his series of limericks and the 2015 report titled "The Committee for Mobilization of Resources for Major Railway Projects and Restructuring of Railway Ministry and Railway Board". The committee was constituted on September 22, 2014, which submitted its final report in June 2015. The committee had made a total of 40 recommendations, out of which, 19 were fully accepted, 7 were partially accepted and 14 recommendations were rejected.

"The Major recommendation of the Debroy committee was to empower field officers. General Managers (GMs) and Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) and Branch officers have been empowered. Along with this the committee had recommended to integrate and synergise technology in the railways. This is being implemented with Vande Bharat Trains and KAVACH systems. On the line of the expert committee, the Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya was established. We are also working on developing the skill set of the workforce in the Railways and empowering Railway officers," Vaishnaw told *The Indian Express*.

up an Independent Regulator etc.

At the top of the recommendation was liberalisation of Indian Railways. While clarifying that by the term "liberalisation", it does not mean "privatization", the committee said that the entry of new operators into railways will be a viable option for encouraging growth and improving services. The committee also said that a regulatory mechanism to promote a healthy competition and to protect the interest of all stakeholders is an essential prerequisite.

"Make private sector, both foreign and domestic entry in IR more attractive and viable by changing the existing norms," said the committee. In view of the opposition from railway unions and political parties, the government did not accept this yet and said that it is under the purview of the Rail Development Authority (RDA).

An official of the Ministry of Railways said, "Unlike other departments, government support in Railways is required for maintaining better passenger facilities. Privatisation can work for the Goods system, but it will not be appropriate for the passenger system. The government felt that its

comes a bit like a corporate board of IR (Indian Railways). The Chairman of the Railway Board should be like a CEO. He/She is not first among equals and should therefore have the powers of final decision-making and veto (in the case of a divided view)," reads the recommendation of the panel. It was accepted by the government and the first Chairman and CEO of Railway board was appointed in September 2020 after the government reconstituted the board in new form.

Offload the off-line services

Apart from this, the committee said that Indian Railways, in addition to its core function of running trains, is engaged in various other activities which are un-remunerative in nature, like provision of security to its customers through Railway Protection Force (RPF), medical and educational facilities to its employees etc, which lays additional burden on IR. The offloading of these services is under the consideration of the government.

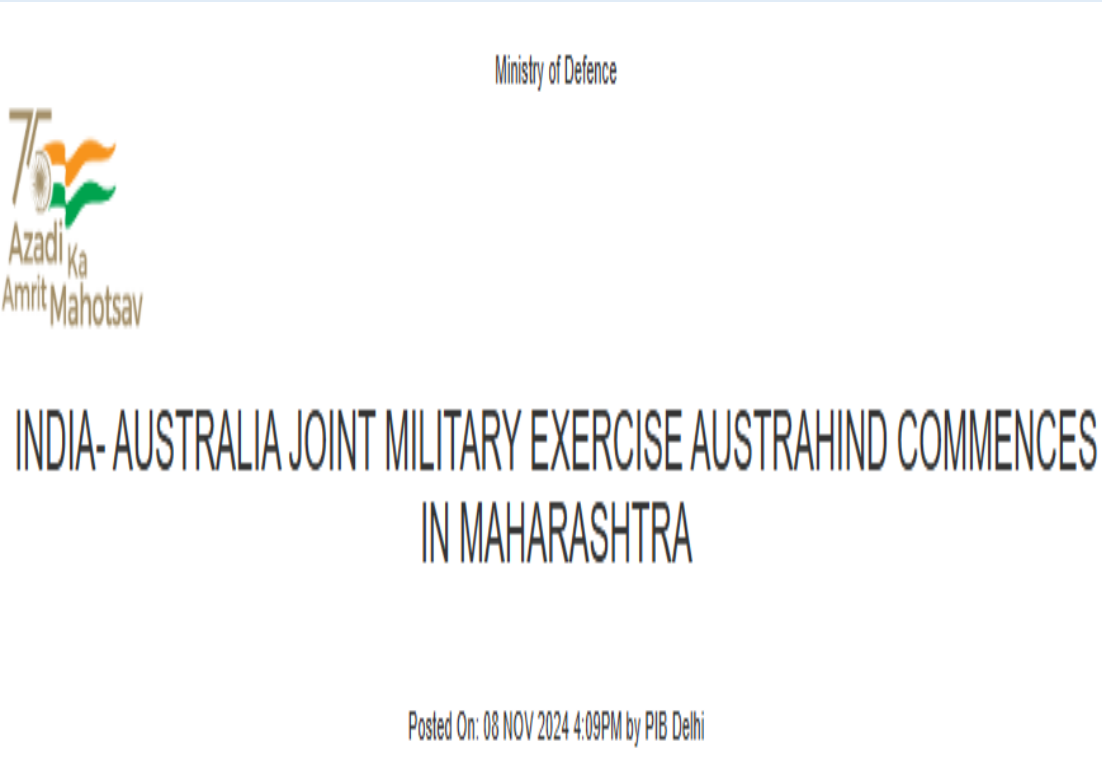
The panel also recommended a major overhaul of IR's accounting, which was subsequently taken up. With regards to this, in a

- 2015 Expert Committee on Railway Reforms: Headed by the late economist Bibek Debroy.
 - Aimed for economic viability and competitiveness of Indian Railways.
 - Implemented Recommendations:
 - Phased out the separate Rail Budget.
 - Redesignated Chairman of Railway Board as CEO.
 - Empowered General Managers (GMs) and Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs).

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB: Defense(GSIII)



- The 3rd edition of joint military Exercise AUSTRAHIND commenced at Foreign Training Node, Pune in Maharashtra today. The exercise will be conducted from 8th to 21st November 2024.
- Exercise AUSTRAHIND is an annual event conducted alternatively in India and Australia. Last edition of the same exercise was conducted in Australia in December 2023.
- Aim of Exercise AUSTRAHIND is to promote military cooperation between India and Australia through enhancement of interoperability in conduct of joint sub conventional operations in semi-urban environment in semi-desert terrain under Chapter VII of the UN mandate. The exercise will focus on high degree of physical fitness, joint planning and joint tactical drills.