



## SC Refuses to Give a Yardstick for Reservation in Promotions

**For Prelims:** Reservation, Promotions, Supreme Court, Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe, Indira Sawhney Case, M Nagaraj Case

**For mains:** Judgements & Cases, Issues Related to SCs & STs, Reservation in Promotion and Various Cases Related to it.

### Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) refused to lay down the “yardstick” for determining the inadequacy of representation for granting [reservation in promotions](#) for [Scheduled Caste \(SC\)/Scheduled Tribe \(ST\)](#) candidates in government jobs.

- The court’s judgement came in a batch of **petitions** from across the country **seeking further clarity on the modalities for granting reservation in promotion.**

### Key Points

- **SC’s Ruling:**
  - **Cadre for Collecting Data:**
    - It held ‘cadre’ and not class, group or the entire service as the unit for the purpose of collection of quantifiable data for giving promotion quotas.
    - It said otherwise the **entire exercise of reservation in promotions would be rendered meaningless** if data pertaining to the representation of SCs and STs was done with reference to the entire service.
  - **No Yardstick:**
    - The question of **adequate representation of an SC/ST community ought to be left to the respective States** to determine and it cannot lay down any yardstick for determining the inadequacy of representation.
  - **Set Aside the Judgement in B.K. Pavithra Case (2019):**
    - With the recognition of ‘cadre’ as the unit for collection of quantifiable data, the court **set aside its earlier judgement in the B.K. Pavithra case.**
    - **SC held that the conclusion of this court approving the collection of data on the basis of groups and not cadres is contrary to the law** laid down by the SC in Nagaraj and Jarnail Singh judgments.
    - The court held that the **Nagaraj judgement would have “prospective effect.”**
  - **Review Ordered:**
    - The SC **ordered that a review had to be conducted regarding the data** for the purpose of determining the inadequacy of representation in promotions.
    - However, **the court left it to the Union government to fix a “reasonable” time** for the States to conduct the review.
- **Background:**
  - **Reservation in Promotions:**
    - The **Central and the State Government since the 1950s have been following a policy of reserving seats in promotions** in favours of SC and ST

communities on the ground that they are not adequately represented at the decision making level of public services.

- **Indra Sawhney Case 1992:**
  - This policy was held to be unconstitutional and void by the SC in [\*Indra Sawhney v. Union Of India 1992\*](#) case on the ground that under Article 16(4) the State is provided with the power to make reservations in favour of backward classes of citizens only at the entry level that is at the time of recruitment into public services but not subsequently.
  - The Parliament responded by enacting the [77<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act which introduced Article 16\(4A\)](#).
- **M Nagaraj Case 2006:**
  - In this case applying the creamy layer concept in SC/ST reservation in promotions, the SC reversed its earlier stance in the *Indra Sawhney case (1992)*, in which it had excluded the [creamy layer](#) concept on SCs/STs (that was applicable on OBCs).
  - The SC had **upheld the Constitutional amendments by which Articles 16 (4A) and 16 (4B) were inserted**, saying they flow from Article 16 (4) and do not alter its structure.
  - It also laid down **three conditions for promotion of SCs and STs** in public employment.
    - The SC and ST community should be socially and educationally backward.
    - The SC and ST communities are not adequately represented in Public employment.
    - Such a reservation policy shall not affect the overall efficiency in the administration.
  - The court held that the **government cannot introduce a quota in promotion for its SC/ST employees unless** it proves that the particular community was backward, inadequately represented and providing reservation in promotion would not affect the overall efficiency of public administration.
    - The opinion of the government should be **based on quantifiable data**.
- **Jarnail Singh Case 2018:**
  - Later in 2018, in the Jarnail Singh case, SC modified the Nagaraj judgement to the extent that **State need not produce quantifiable data to prove the “backwardness”** of a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe community in order to provide quota in promotion in public employment.
  - The court had given a **huge fillip to the government’s efforts to provide “accelerated promotion with consequential seniority”** for Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) members in government services.

## Constitutional Provisions for Promotion in Reservation

- **Article 16 (4):** Provides that the State can make any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens who, in the opinion of the state, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.
- **Article 16 (4A):** Provides that the State can make any provision for reservation in matters of promotion in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes if they are not adequately represented in the services under the State.
- **Article 16(4B):** Added by the **81<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000** which enabled the unfilled SC/ST quota of a particular year to be carried forward to the next year.
- **Article 335:** It recognises that special measures need to be adopted for considering the claims of SCs and STs to services and posts, in order to bring them at par.
  - **82<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000** inserted a condition at the end of Article 335 that enables the state to make any provision in favour of the members of the SC/STs for relaxation in qualifying marks in any examination.

## Supreme Court on MLAs' One-year Suspension

**For Prelims:** Article 14, Article 212, Article 194, Basic Structure of the Constitution, section 151 (A) of The Representation of the People Act, 1951, Provisions related to the Houses of Parliament.

**For Mains:** Representation of the People Act, 1951, Separation of Powers, SC Judgement.

### Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) has set aside the one-year suspension of 12 BJP MLAs from the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. The Supreme Court held that suspension for a year was 'unconstitutional, substantively illegal and irrational'.

### Key Points

#### ▪ About the Suspension of MLAs:

- The MLAs were suspended for **misbehaviour in the Assembly** pertaining to **disclosure of data regarding OBCs**.
- The challenge to suspension relies mainly on grounds of denial of the **principles of natural justice**, and of **violation of laid-down procedure**.
  - The 12 MLAs have said they were not given an opportunity to present their case, and that the suspension violated their fundamental right to equality before the law under [Article 14 of the Constitution](#).
- **Rule 53 of Maharashtra Assembly:** It states that the **“Speaker may direct any member who refuses to obey his decision, or whose conduct is, in his opinion, grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Assembly”**.
  - The member must **“absent himself during the remainder of the day’s meeting”**.
  - Should any member be ordered to withdraw for a second time in the same session, the Speaker may direct the member to absent himself “for any period not longer than the remainder of the Session”.

#### ▪ Arguments by Maharashtra Assembly:

- **Article 212:** The House had acted within its **legislative competence**, under Article 212, and courts do not have jurisdiction to inquire into the proceedings of the legislature.
  - Article 212 (1) states that “The validity of any proceedings in the Legislature of a State shall not be called in question on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure”.
- **Vacancy of Seats:** The state had also said that a seat does not automatically become vacant if the member does not attend the House for 60 days but it becomes vacant only if declared so by the House.
  - It was submitted that the House is not obligated to declare such a seat vacant.
- **Article 194:** The state has also referred to [Article 194 on the powers and privileges of the House](#), and argued that any member who transgresses these privileges can be suspended through the inherent powers of the House.
  - It has denied that the power to suspend a member can be exercised only through Rule 53 of the Assembly.

#### ▪ Arguments by the Supreme Court:

- **Irrational Suspension:** Suspension of a member must be preferred as a short term or a temporary, disciplinary measure for restoring order in the Assembly.

- Anything in excess of that would be irrational suspension.
- **Manipulating Opposition:** It said that a thin majority coalition government could use such suspensions to manipulate the number of Opposition party members.
  - Such Opposition will not be able to effectively participate in discussions/debates in the House fearing suspension of its members for a longer period.
- **Violation of Basic Structure of the Constitution:** The [basic structure of the Constitution](#) would be hit if the constituencies of the suspended MLAs remained unrepresented in the Assembly for a full year.
- **Constitutional Requirement:** The bench referred to **Article 190 (4)** of the Constitution, which says, “If for a period of sixty days a member of a House of the Legislature of a State is without permission of the House absent from all meetings thereof, the House may declare his seat vacant.”
- **Statutory Requirement:** Under **Section 151 (A) of The Representation of the People Act, 1951**, “a bye-election for filling any vacancy shall be held within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy”.
  - This means that barring exceptions specified under this section, no constituency can remain without a representative for more than six months.
- **Punishing Whole Constituency:** The Supreme Court said that the **one-year suspension was prima facie unconstitutional as it went beyond the six-month limit**, and amounted to “not punishing the member but **punishing the constituency as a whole**”.
- **Question of Supreme Court Intervention:** The Supreme Court is expected to rule on the question of whether the judiciary can intervene in the proceedings of the House.
  - Constitutional experts, however, say that the court has clarified in previous rulings that the judiciary can intervene in case of an **unconstitutional act done by the House**.

### Provisions for Suspension of a Member of Parliament

- Rules 373, 374, and 374A of the **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha provide** for the withdrawal of a member whose conduct is “**grossly disorderly**”, and suspension of one who abuses the rules of the House or willfully obstructs its business.
- The maximum suspension as per these Rules is “**for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less**”.
- The maximum suspension for **Rajya Sabha under Rules 255 and 256** also does not exceed the remainder of the session.
- Similar Rules also are in place for **state legislative assemblies** and councils which prescribe a maximum suspension not exceeding the remainder of the session.

[Source: IE](#)

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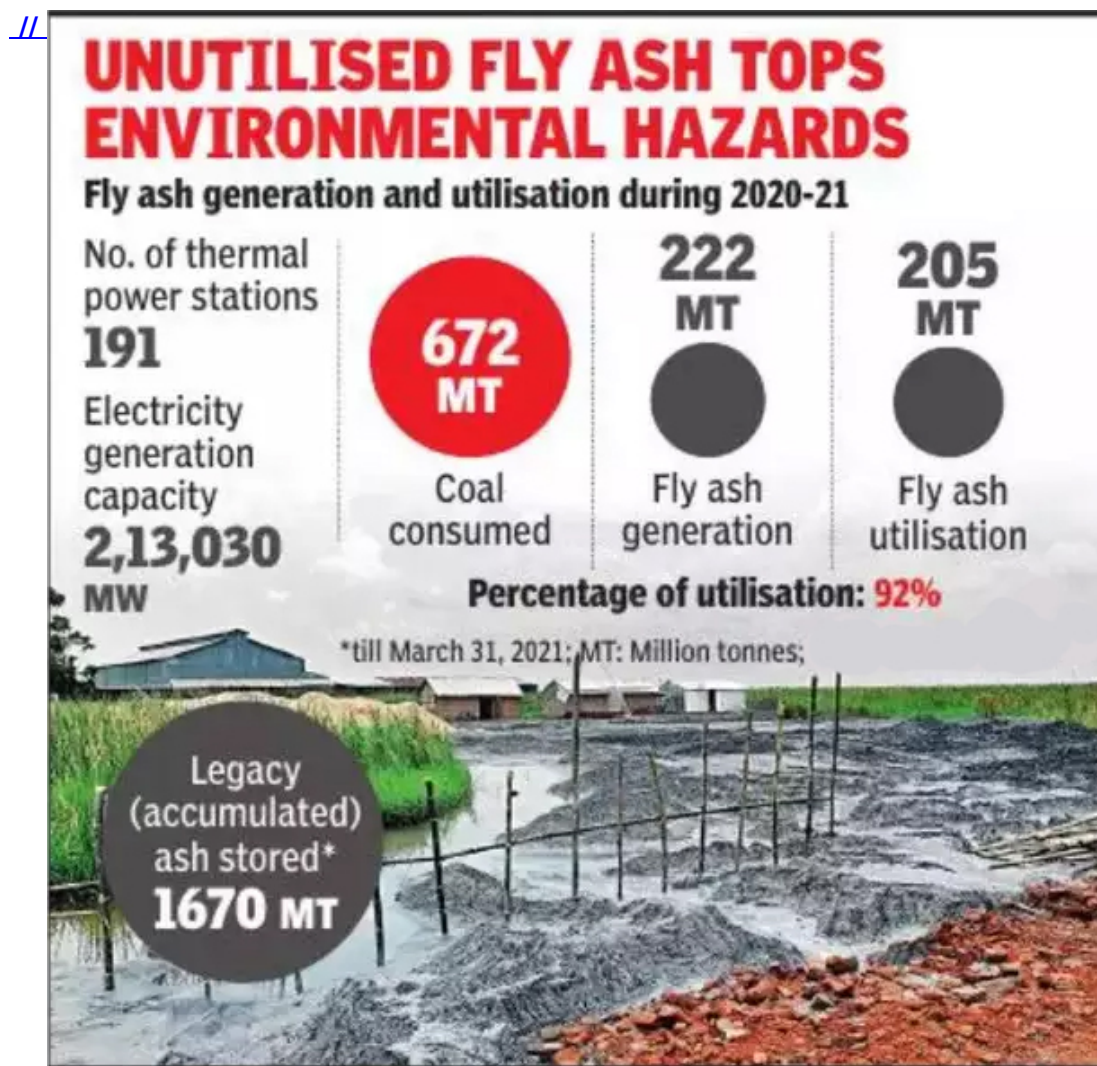
## Fly Ash Management and Utilisation Mission

**For Prelims:** Fly Ash Management and Utilisation Mission, National Green Tribunal, Central Pollution Control Board, Fly Ash Notification, Rihand Reservoir.

**For mains:** Government Policies & Interventions, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Fly Ash and Related Issues, Fly Ash Management and Utilisation Mission.

## Why in News

Recently, the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) directed the constitution of a '[Fly Ash Management and Utilisation Mission](#)'.



## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- The order by the NGT takes note of the '**unscientific handling and storage**' of the fly ash by coal thermal power stations.
  - For example, the draining of industrial effluents and fly ash in the [Rihand Reservoir](#).
- The Fly Ash Management and Utilisation Mission, besides monitoring the disposal of annual stock of unutilised fly ash, will also see how 1,670 million tonnes of legacy (accumulated) fly ash could be utilized in the least hazardous manner and how all safety measures could be taken by the power plants.
- The Mission will **hold its first meeting within one month to assess the fly ash management situation in coal power plants** and to prepare action plans to build road maps for ash utilisation by individual plants.
  - These meetings shall be **conducted each month, for a year**.

### ▪ Aim:

- To 'coordinate and monitor issues relating to the handling and disposal of fly ash and associated issues.'

### ▪ Head & Nodal Agency:

- The Mission is to be jointly headed by the secretaries of the Union **Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**, Union **Ministry of Coal and Power, keeping on board chief secretaries of respective states** where the mission is being implemented.
- The secretary of **MoEF&CC will be the nodal agency** for coordination and compliance.
- **Different from Fly Ash Notification 2021:**
  - Fly Ash Notification 2021 was issued under the **Environment (Protection) Act 1986**.
    - Prohibiting dumping and disposal of fly ash discharged from coal or lignite based thermal power plants on land or into water bodies, the **Centre has made it mandatory for such plants to ensure 100% utilization of ash in an eco-friendly manner**, and introduced for the first time a penalty regime for non-compliance based on 'polluter pays' principle.
    - Under new rules, **the non-compliant power plants will be imposed with an environmental compensation** of Rs 1,000 per tonne on unutilised ash during the end of every financial year.
    - The amount, collected by the [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#) from the thermal power plants, **will be used towards the safe disposal of the unutilised ash**. It may also be utilised for advancing research on use of ash including ash based products.
    - In cases where fly ash is being used in various activities, **power plants will have to deliver fly ash at project sites free of cost**.
    - The **power plant may, however, charge for ash cost and transportation as per mutually agreed terms**, in case it is able to dispose of the ash through other means.
  - The new fly ash notification of December 2021, has made **provision for the 'enforcement, monitoring, audit and reporting' of the progress of fly ash utilisation and implementation** by coal thermal power plants and user agencies.
  - The Notification **holds the CPCB and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) / Pollution Control Committees (PCC) responsible** for monitoring the effective implementation of mandates under it.
  - However, along with these statutory regulators, **the Mission also extends the responsibility of fly ash management to the chief secretaries of the states**.
  - The **Notification mandates the individual thermal power plant to upload monthly information** regarding ash generation and utilisation on its web portal.
    - The Mission as directed by the NGT, on the other hand, will make the roadmaps and progress in fly ash utilisation available for all thermal power plants and their clusters, on the MoEF&CC website on a quarterly basis for the knowledge of all stakeholders.

## Fly Ash

- **About:**
  - Fly ash is an **unwanted unburnt residue of coal combustion in a coal thermal power plant**.
  - It is **emitted along with flue gases** during the burning of coal in a furnace and collected using the electrostatic precipitators.
  - The fly ash **collected with the help of precipitators is converted into a wet slurry** to minimise fugitive dust emissions.
  - It is then **transported to the scientifically designed ash ponds** through slurry pipelines.
- **Composition:** Fly ash includes substantial amounts of silicon dioxide (SiO<sub>2</sub>), aluminium oxide (Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>), ferric oxide (Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) and calcium oxide (CaO).
- **Properties:**
  - **Resemble Portland cement** but is chemically different.
    - Portland cement is a binding material in the form of a finely ground powder that is manufactured by burning and grinding a mixture of limestone and clay.
    - Its chemical composition includes calcium silicates, calcium aluminate and calcium aluminoferrite.
  - **Exhibit cementitious properties.**

- A cementitious material is one that hardens when mixed with water.
- **Uses:** It is used in **concrete and cement products, road base, metal recovery, and mineral filler** among others.
- **Harmful Effects:** Fly ash particles are toxic air pollutants. They can trigger heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases and stroke.
  - When combined with water they cause leaching of heavy metals in ground water.
  - It also pollutes the soil, and affects the root development system of trees.
  - **Gross under-utilisation of this by-product over the years has led to the accumulation** of 1,670 million tonnes of fly ash according to the Summary of Ash Generation and Utilisation during 2020-2021 by the Joint Committee earlier constituted by the NGT.
- **Related Initiatives:**
  - Earlier in 2021, [National Thermal Power Corporation \(NTPC\)](#) Limited had invited [Expression of Interest \(EOI\)](#) for sale of fly ash.
  - NTPC has also collaborated with Cement manufacturers around the country to supply Fly Ash.
  - [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana \(Urban\)](#) has focused on new construction technologies such as using fly ash bricks that are innovative, and environmentally friendly.
    - Even state governments have come out with their Fly ash utilisation policies, e.g. **Maharashtra was the first state to adopt the policy.**
  - A web portal for monitoring of fly ash generation and utilisation and a mobile based application titled **“ASHTRACK”** has been launched by the Government.
  - [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#) rates on fly ash and its products have been reduced to 5%.

[Source: DTE](#)

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## Cage Culture in Aquaculture

**For Prelims:** Cage Culture in Aquaculture, Initiatives in the Fisheries Sector.

**For Mains:** Significance of Cage culture in Aquaculture and Challenges, Blue Revolution.

### Why in News

The **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** organised a **webinar on “Cage aquaculture in Reservoir: Sleeping Giants”** as a part of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

- Department of Fisheries, GOI earmarked the investment targets for **promoting cage aquaculture under flagship scheme [Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana \(PMMSY\)](#).**

### Key Points

- **About:**



- Cage aquaculture involves the **growing of fishes in existing water resources while being enclosed in a net cage** which allows free flow of water.
- It is an aquaculture production system **made of a floating frame, net materials and mooring system (with rope, buoy, anchor etc.) with a round or square shaped floating net** to hold and culture large numbers of fishes and can be installed in reservoir, river, lake or sea.
- Cage farms are positioned in such a way **to utilize natural currents, which provide the fish with oxygen and other appropriate natural conditions.**
- **Factors Causing Cage Culture:**
  - Factors such as increasing consumption of fish, declining stocks of wild fishes and poor farm economy have increased interest in fish production in cages.
  - Many small or limited resource farmers are looking for alternatives to traditional agricultural crops.
  - In view of the high production attainable in the cage culture system, it can play a significant role in increasing the overall fish production in India.
- **Significance:**
  - **Removes Constraints of fish farming on land:**
    - Farming of fish in an existing water body **removes one of the biggest constraints of fish farming** on land, ie., the need for a constant flow of clean, oxygenated water.
  - **Least Carbon Emission:**
    - Cage culture is a low impact farming practice with high returns and **least carbon emission activity.**
  - **Expanding Opportunities:**
    - Aquaculture appears to be a rapidly expanding industry and it offers opportunities even on a small scale.
  - **Better Utilization of India's long Coastline:**
    - Suitable locations in India's long coastline, vast brackish water areas available in coastal states and other underutilized water bodies can be better utilized by adopting cage culture.
  - **Offers alternative income Source:**
    - Since the investment is low and requires very little / no land area, this farming method is ideal for small-scale fisherfolks as an alternative income source.
    - This can be taken up as a household / women activity since labour involved is minimal and can be managed by a small family.
    - The design of the cage and its accessories can be tailor-made in accordance to the individual farmer's requirements.
- **Challenges:**
  - Feed to the caged fish must be nutritionally complete and kept fresh.
  - Low Dissolved Oxygen Syndrome (LODOS) is an ever present problem and may require mechanical aeration.
  - Fouling of the net cage.
  - Vandalism or poaching is a potential problem.
  - Navigation issues.
  - Accumulation of unused feed and excreta will lead to water pollution as well as eutrophication.



- Change in water quality parameters.
- Conflicts within the local community.
- Predation by aquatic mammals and birds.
- Escapement.
- Overcrowding of aquatic organisms in cages.

### Initiatives related to Fisheries

- [Matsya Setu](#)
- [Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund \(FIDF\)](#).
- [Blue Revolution](#)
- [Marine Products Export Development Authority \(MPEDA\)](#)
- [Kisan Credit Card \(KCC\)](#)

### Way Forward

- There is a need to have **a robust cage culture system in reservoirs including potential markets** to ensure good returns to the farmers.
- Need for the scientists and the Fisheries Departments of the States/ UTs to motivate fish farmers and develop innovative ways as well as policies for increasing profits, decreasing input cost, species diversification and increasing the production and productivity of cage culture systems in the reservoirs.
- There is a need for promotion of cage aquaculture in reservoirs of the country by following good management practises and providing support services.

[Source: PIB](#)

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## Lala Lajpat Rai

**For Prelims:** Lala Lajpat Rai, Indian Freedom Movement

**For mains:** Lala Lajpat Rai and his contributions in various spheres of Indian Independence movement.

### Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister paid tribute to **Lala Lajpat Rai** on his Jayanti.

- Lala Lajpat Rai's birth anniversary is celebrated on **28<sup>th</sup> of January every year.**

**If I had the power to influence Indian journals, I would have the following headlines printed in bold letters on the first page: Milk for the infants, Food for the adults and Education for all.**



## Key Points

### ▪ Birth:

- He was born on **28<sup>th</sup> January, 1865** in a small village named Dhudike in Punjab's Ferozepur district.

### ▪ About:

- Lala Lajpat Rai was **one of the greatest freedom fighters** of India.
- He was also called '**Punjab Kesari**' and '**Lion of Punjab**'.
- He **studied law** at the Government College, Lahore.
- Was **influenced by Swami Dayananda Saraswati** and joined the Arya Samaj in Lahore.
- He believed that the **ideals in Hinduism combined with nationalism** will lead to the establishment of a secular state.
- Along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, he formed the **Lal-Bal-Pal trio of extremist leaders**.
- He was also involved with the [Hindu Mahasabha](#).
- He fought **against untouchability**.

### ▪ Contributions:

#### ◦ Political:

- He joined the [Indian National Congress \(INC\)](#) and participated in many political agitations in Punjab.
- For his political agitation, he was **deported to Burma without trial in 1907** but returned after a few months because of lack of evidence.
- He was **opposed to the partition of Bengal**.
- He founded the **Home Rule League of America in 1917** in New York. In the US, he worked to get moral support for the Indian independence movement from the international community.
- He was also **elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress**.
- He supported the [non-cooperation movement](#) of Gandhi at the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920.
- He **protested against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre** that followed.
- He was elected **deputy leader of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926**.
- In 1928, he moved **a resolution in the assembly refusing cooperation with the Simon Commission** since the Commission had no Indian members.

#### ◦ Social:

- He founded **Hindu Relief movement in 1897** to provide help to the famine-stricken people and thus prevent them falling into the clutches of the missionaries.
- He **founded the Servants of People Society in 1921**.

#### ◦ Literary:

- His important literary works include Young India, England's Debt to India, Evolution

of Japan, India's Will to Freedom, Message of the Bhagavad Gita, Political Future of India, Problem of National Education in India, The Depressed Classes, and the travelogue 'United States of America'.

- **Institutional:**

- He founded several **institutions and organizations** such as Hisar Bar Council, Hisar Arya Samaj, Hisar Congress, National DAV Managing Committee.
- He was the editor of the Arya Gazette, which he had founded.
- He co-founded the Punjab National Bank in 1894.

- **Death:**

- In 1928, he was leading a **silent protest against the Simon Commission in Lahore** when he was brutally lathi-charged by Superintendent of Police, James Scott. He died of injuries sustained a few weeks later.

[Source: PIB](#)

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## US Federal Reserve & Indian Market

### Why in News

Recently, the **US Federal Reserve** (central bank of US) has signalled a possible hike in interest rates. This has led to a nervous reaction in Indian markets.

- Rate hikes by the **Federal Reserve** affects not only the US economy, but also shapes the **macroeconomic outlook** and exerts a certain degree of influence on the **monetary policies in other emerging economies**.

### Key Points

- **Co-relation of Federal Reserve & Indian Markets:**

- **Emerging economies** such as India tend to have **higher inflation and higher interest rates** than those in **developed countries** such as the US and many of the (primarily Western) European nations.
- As a result, financial institutions, particularly [Foreign Institutional Investors \(FIIs\)](#) would **want to borrow money in the US at low interest rates in dollar terms and then invest that money in government bonds of emerging countries** such as India in **local currency terms** to earn a higher rate of interest.
- When the US Federal raises its domestic interest rates, the difference between the **interest rates of the two countries decreases**.
- This **makes India less attractive for the currency carry trade**, consequently, some of the money may be expected to move out of the Indian markets and flow back to the US.
  - A currency carry trade is a strategy whereby a **high-yielding currency funds the trade with a low-yielding currency**.
- Therefore **decreasing the value of India's currency against the US dollar**.

- **Impact of Increased Interest Rates on India:**

- **On Equity Market:**

- [Bond yields](#) will rise due to growing dollar shortage in the global market.
- Previously, in India, the debt and equity markets witnessed **outflows of over Rs 40,000 crore rupees**, due to the strengthening dollar and uncertainties

perpetrated by the trade war between the US, China, [European Union](#), and other major nations.

- **On Export and Forex:**

- India being one of the **largest crude oil importers** of the world.
- A **weaker rupee vis-à-vis a dollar** results in more expensive imports of crude oil that may put **cost-driven inflationary** push across the whole economy and especially in those sectors that are highly sensitive to crude oil price movements.
- India's exports on the other hand, notably **IT and IT-enabled services** - will benefit to some extent from a stronger dollar with respect to the rupee.
- However, the **same benefit may not fully accrue to exporters** due to strong competition in the export market.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Statehood Day of Himachal Pradesh

### Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister of India greeted people of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) on its statehood day (25<sup>th</sup> January).



## Key Points

### History During British Rule:

State Animal:	Snow Leopard
State Bird:	Western Tragopan
State Flower:	Pink Rhododendron
State Language:	Hindi & Local Dialects
Major Rivers and Dams:	Sutlej (Bhakra Dam, Gobind Sagar reservoir, Koldam Dam), Beas (Pandoh Dam, Maharana Pratap Sagar Reservoir), Ravi (Chamera Dam), Parbati
Major Lakes:	Renuka, Rewalsar, Khajjiar, Dal, Beas Kund, Dasaur, Brighu, Prashar, Mani Mahesh, Chander Tal, Suraj Tal, Kareri, Sreolsar, Gobind Sagar,

	Nako
National Parks	Great Himalayan National Park, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga, Inderkila, Simbalbara

- The British territories in the hill came under British Crown after **Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858**.
- The states of **Chamba, Mandi and Bilaspur** made good progress in many fields during British rule.
- During the **first World War (1914-18)**, virtually all rulers of the hill states remained loyal and contributed to the British war effort both in the form of men and materials.
- **History During Post-Independence Period:** The history of present day Himachal Pradesh in the post-independence era has been outlined below:
  - The **Chief Commissioner's province of H.P.** came into being on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1948.
  - H.P. became a **part C state (under Part VII) on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1950** with the implementation of the Constitution of India.
  - Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1954.
  - After recommendation of the [State Reorganisation Commission](#), Himachal Pradesh became **Union Territory on 1st November, 1956**.
  - Kangra and most of the other hill areas of Punjab were merged with H.P. on 1st November, 1966 though its status remained that of a Union Territory.
  - On 18th December, 1970 the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament and the **new state came into being on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1971**. Thus H.P. emerged as the **eighteenth state of the Indian Union**.
  - Himachal Pradesh has come a long way since then. It has seen a number of full-fledged governments which have led the state towards economic self-reliance.

### State Reorganisation Commission

- Having achieved India's independence from British rule, reorganization of more than 500 princely states into effective provincial units was one of the biggest tasks.
- In pursuance of the same, **S. K. Dhar commission (1948) and JVP Committee (1948)** advocated for **reorganization of states based on geographical contiguity, administrative convenience, financial self-reliance and potential for development**.
- However, with the sudden death of **Potti Sriramalu** following hunger **strike in demand for Andhra state** created a volatile situation.
- The **Fazl Ali Commission (1953)** was set up and its recommendation for reorganization of state based on **linguistic criteria (other criteria were also included) was accepted**.

[Source: PIB](#)

## India- Pakistan Joint Protocol on Religious Pilgrimages 1974

### Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** announced that India is "positive" and "willing to engage" in talks with Pakistan on upgrading the **1974 Joint Protocol on Religious Pilgrimages**.

- It will allow air travel as well as increase the number of shrines pilgrims from both countries could visit.
- The government also [reopened the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara corridor](#) to Pakistan to allow Sikh pilgrims to cross over, more than 20 months after it was shut down due to the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
- Earlier, India and Pakistan had [exchanged a list of their nuclear installations](#).

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- Under the protocol **both the countries agreed on the following principles** for facilitating visits to such shrines :
  - Pilgrimage **visits from one country to the other shall be allowed without discrimination** as to religion or sect. The **list of shrines to be visited shall be finalised** shortly through correspondence.
    - The agreed list may be **enlarged from time to time by mutual agreement**.
    - The protocol currently includes five Muslim shrines on the Indian side and 15 shrines on the Pakistani side, a majority of them gurdwaras.
  - Upto **20 parties may be allowed to visit** from one country to the other every year. This number may be revised from time to time.
  - Every **effort should continue to be made to ensure that places of religious worship mentioned in the agreed list are properly maintained** and their sanctity preserved.
  - Such visitors will be given **Visitor Category visas**.

### ▪ Kartarpur Corridor:

- The Kartarpur corridor **connects the Darbar Sahib Gurdwara in Narowal district of Pakistan with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district in India's Punjab province**.
- The corridor was built to **commemorate 550th birth anniversary celebrations of [Guru Nanak Dev](#)**, founder of Sikhism on 12th November 2019.

[Source: TH](#)

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## Padma Awards 2022

### Why in News

**General Bipin Rawat**, first [Chief of Defence Staff](#) who died in an air crash recently, and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh who headed the State during the [Babri Masjid demolition](#) were conferred with **Padma Vibhushan** posthumously on the **eve of the Republic Day (73<sup>rd</sup>)**.

- Padma Vibhushan, part of the Padma series, is the **second highest civilian award**.

### Key Points

#### ▪ Background:

- The Padma Awards are **announced annually on Republic Day (26<sup>th</sup> January)**.

◦ Instituted in 1954, it is **one of the highest civilian honours of India.**

▪ **Objective:**

◦ To recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

▪ **Categories:**

◦ The Awards are given in **three categories:**

- Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service),
- Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher-order) and
- Padma Shri (distinguished service).

◦ Padma Vibhushan is highest in the hierarchy of Padma Awards followed by Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

▪ **Disciplines:**

◦ The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service etc.

▪ **Selection Process:**

◦ **Padma Awards Committee:** The Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.

◦ **Awarded by President:** The awards are presented by the President of India usually in the month of March/April every year.

## **Bharat Ratna**

▪ Bharat Ratna is the **highest civilian award of the country.**

▪ It is **awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance** of the highest order in any field of human endeavour.

▪ It is **treated on a different footing from Padma Award.** The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President of India.

▪ The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is **restricted to a maximum of three** in a particular year.

**[Source: TH](#)**

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