



Political Party System

POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM

Groups of like-minded individuals voluntarily organise to gain political power through constitutional means, aiming to promote the national interest

- ▶ Three Types of Party Systems : One Party (China), Two Party (USA), Multi-Party (India)
- ▶ Parties in India:
 - ▶ National (6) : E.g. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M), and National People's Party
 - ▶ State : E.g. DMK, AIADMK, Telugu Desam, Shiv Sena, Asom Gana Parishad, Mizo National Front, etc.
- ▶ Recognised national/state parties allotted a symbol exclusively reserved for its use in their respective jurisdiction

Criteria for National Party Recognition

- ▶ Secures 6% of valid votes (VV) polled in any 4 or more states at a general election (GE) to the Lok Sabha (LS)/legislative assembly (LA)+it wins 4 seats in the LS from one or more states
- ▶ If it wins 2% of seats in LS at a GE (from 3 states)
- ▶ If it is recognized as a state party in 4 states.

Criteria for State Party Recognition

- ▶ If it secures 6% of the VV polled in the state at a GE to the LA+ it wins 2 seats in LA of the state concerned; or
- ▶ If it wins 3% of seats in the LA at a GE to the LA of the state concerned or 3 seats in the LA, whichever is more; or
- ▶ If it secures 8% of the total VV polled in the state at a GE to the LS from the state or to the LA of the state.
- ▶ If it secures 6% of the VV polled in the state at a GE to the LS from the state concerned+ it wins 1 seat in the LS from the state concerned; or
- ▶ If it wins 1 seat in the LS for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a GE to the LS from the state concerned; or



Drishti IAS

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SC Verdict on Revocation of Article 370

For Prelims: [Article 370](#), [Supreme Court](#), [Special Status](#), [Union Territory](#), [Asymmetric Federalism](#), [Constituent Assembly of India](#), [Instrument of Accession](#), [Articles 371](#), [371A-I](#), [Article 367](#), [Legislative Assembly](#).

For Mains: Relevance of the judgement of the [Supreme Court](#) on the polity and the economy of the [Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir](#).

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, The [Supreme Court](#) gave its verdict on the Union government's **2019 move to amend [Article 370 of the Constitution](#)**. The abrogation had ended the [special status](#) conferred to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. **The court held the Constitutional order that revoked Article 370 as valid.**

What is the Recent Judgement of the Supreme Court?

- **Jammu and Kashmir did not Possess Sovereignty:**
 - SC observed that there is much evidence in Article 370 and the J&K Constitution to show that in regards to Kashmir, a merger agreement was not necessary to surrender its sovereignty.
 - **Article 370(1) applied Article 1** of the Constitution of India (where J&K was listed as a Part III State) with no modifications.
 - **Section 3** of the J&K Constitution explicitly states that **“the State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India.”**
 - **Section 147 of the Indian constitution prohibited any amendments to Section 3**, further making the provision absolute.
 - Thus, Court said that the Constitution of India, **“became the supreme governing document of the land.”** Further, the Preamble to the J&K Constitution shows a **“clear absence of...a reference to sovereignty.”**
- **Article 370 is a Temporary Provision:**
 - The SC relied on the fact that the Constitution framers placed **Article 370 with the temporary and transitional provisions contained in Part XXI.**
 - Then, it pointed out that the **Instrument of Accession (IoA)** made it “abundantly clear” that Article 1 which stated that **“India that is Bharat shall be a Union of States” applied in its entirety to J&K.**
- **Constitutional Validity of Proclamations Under President’s Rule:**
 - SC’s Bench concurred that the President has the power to make **“irreversible changes, including the dissolution of the State Assembly,”** and that the President’s powers are kept in check by **“judicial and constitutional scrutiny.”**
- **The Constitution of J&K Stands Inoperative:**
 - Court held that it is no longer necessary for the Constitution of J&K through which only certain provisions of the Indian Constitution applied to J&K, to exist.
 - The implicit but necessary consequence of the application of the Constitution of India in its entirety to the State of Jammu and Kashmir is that the Constitution of the State is inoperative.
- **Set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Address Human Rights:**
 - The SC recommended that the Union set up a **“truth and reconciliation Commission”** just like South Africa did **post-apartheid** to investigate human rights violations by both state and non-state actors. **The exercise should be time-bound.**

What was the Special Status of J&K?

▪ **About:**

- On 5th August 2019, the [President of India](#) in the exercise of the powers conferred by Article 370(1) of the Constitution issued the **Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019**.
 - Through this, the Government of India has **made modifications to Article 370 itself (not revoked it)**.
- With this, the Government of India has dramatically altered the relationship between the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian Union.

▪ **Background:**

- On 17th October 1949, Article 370 was added to the Indian constitution, as a '**temporary provision**', which exempted Jammu & Kashmir, permitting it to draft its own Constitution and restricting the Indian Parliament's legislative powers in the state.
- It was introduced into the draft constitution by N Gopalaswami Ayyangar as Article 306 A.

▪ **Article 370:**

- The [Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir](#) was empowered to recommend which articles of the Indian Constitution should apply to the state.
 - The J&K Constituent Assembly was dissolved after it drafted the state's constitution. **Clause 3 of Article 370 gives the President of India the power to amend its provisions and scope.**
- [Article 35A](#) stems from Article 370 and was introduced through a Presidential Order in 1954, on the recommendation of the J&K Constituent Assembly.
 - Article 35A empowers the Jammu & Kashmir legislature to define the **permanent residents of the state, and their special rights and privileges.**
 - It appears in Appendix I of the Constitution of India.
- Several states have different constitutional guarantees. **These are codified in Articles 371, 371A- I** for states including Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and those in the North East.

Note

For the rest of India, the Constitution lays down an elaborate procedure in [Article 367](#) to **enlarge or curb state power through a constitutional amendment**. However, for J&K, the Constitution provides that a mere executive action under Article 370 would suffice.



What are the Key Changes Brought Out by the Order of 2019?

- **Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019:**
 - The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019 has replaced the [Presidential Order of 1954](#).
 - Subsequently, the [Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019](#), passed by Parliament divides the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two new Union Territories (UTs): Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.
 - This is the **first time that a state has been converted into UTs**.
 - Of the six Lok Sabha seats currently with the state of Jammu and Kashmir, five will remain with the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, while one will be allotted to Ladakh.
 - The **UT of Jammu and Kashmir** will have an Assembly, like in Delhi and Puducherry.
 - Ladakh will be a UT without legislature
 - Kashmir will no longer have a Governor, but rather a [Lieutenant Governor](#) like in Delhi or Puducherry.
- **Status of J&K Union Territory:**
 - J&K Assembly will have a five-year term, not six, as was the earlier case.
 - Section 32 of the J&K 2019 Bill proposes that the Assembly **can make laws on any subjects in the State and Concurrent lists except on state subjects relating to “public order” and “police”**.
 - This is similar to [Article 239A of the Constitution](#) that is applicable to Union Territories of Puducherry and Delhi.
 - However, by insertion of [Article 239AA](#) and by virtue of the [69th Constitutional Amendment](#), the Delhi Assembly cannot legislate on matters in entry 18 of the State List, i.e. land.
 - In the case of J&K, the Assembly can make laws on land.
- **The Special Status of J&K Abolished:**
 - Jammu & Kashmir **will no longer have the separate constitution, flag or anthem**.
 - The citizens of Jammu and Kashmir will not have dual citizenship.
 - As the new union territory of Jammu and Kashmir will be subject to the Indian Constitution, its citizens will now have the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Indian constitution.
 - **Article 360**, which can be used to declare a Financial Emergency, will **now also be applicable**.
 - All laws passed by Parliament will be applicable in Jammu and Kashmir, including the [Right to Information Act](#) and the [Right to Education Act](#).
 - The [Indian Penal Code](#) will replace the **Ranbir Penal Code** of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - **Article 35A, which originates from the provisions of Article 370 stands null and void**.

Note

J&K historically had a unique relationship with the Union. There was no merger agreement between J&K and the Union, **but only the [Instrument of Accession \(IoA\)](#)**. Hence there is no transfer of sovereignty, and the state's autonomy has to be maintained. The IoA deals with external sovereignty. External sovereignty is lost with a few exceptions here and there. [CJI in recent judgement said that J&K has no internal sovereignty after the signing of IoA](#).

What were the Different Legal Challenges in Abrogation of Article 370?

- **Constitutional Challenges:**
 - Presidential order that sought to abrogate Jammu and Kashmir's special status, according to **Article 370 (3) the President would require the recommendation of the constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir** to make such a change.
 - However, the **2019 Presidential order adds a sub-clause to Article 367**, replacing the terms:
 - “Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir” to mean “legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir”.

- “Government of Jammu and Kashmir” to mean “Governor of Jammu and Kashmir acting on the aid and advice of the council of ministers”.
- The government **sought to dilute the autonomy under Article 370 without bringing a Constitutional Amendment** that would require a two-thirds majority in the Parliament.
- This provision **was challenged in the Supreme Court on the ground that it added article 35A to the Indian Constitution only through a Presidential Order.**
- Conversion of Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory **is in violation of Article 3, as the Bill was not referred to the President by the State Assembly.**
- In the reorganisation of the state, **the Presidential order also requires the concurrence of the government of the state.** However, since Jammu & Kashmir is currently under the Governor’s rule, the Governor’s concurrence is deemed to be the government’s concurrence.
- **Federalism Issue:**
 - The Instrument of Accession was **like a treaty between two sovereign countries** that had decided to work together.
 - In **Santosh Kumar v. State of J&K & ors, 2017**, the SC said that due to historical reasons, Jammu and Kashmir had a special status.
 - In **SBI v Zaffar Ullah Nehru, 2016**, the SC held that Article 370 cannot be repealed without the concurrence of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir.

What are the Signs of Peace and Security in J&K After the Abrogation of Article 370?

- **Reduction in Stone Pelting and Militancy:**
 - Increased security presence and action by central agencies like the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** led to decrease in the cases of stone pelting.
 - The number of stone-pelting incidents decreased from 618 in 2019 to 222 in 2020.
 - Injuries to security forces decreased from 64 in 2019 to 10 in 2021.
- **Reduction in Civilian Injuries:**
 - Civilian Injuries from pellet guns and baton charges reduced from 339 (2019) to 25 (2021).
 - Law and Order also improved in J&K as only 20 law and order incidents were reported in 2022.
- **Arrests of Militants and Over-Ground Workers (OGWs):**
 - Arrests of OGWs of militant groups increased from 82 in 2019 to 178 in 2021.
 - There has been a 32% decline in terrorist acts from August 2019 to June 2022, compared to the preceding 10 months.

How did the International Community Respond to the Abrogation of Article 370?

- **Pakistan and the Muslim World:**
 - Pakistan refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Indian Constitution over Jammu and Kashmir.
 - The **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** reiterated its call to reverse “all illegal and unilateral measures taken since 5th August 2019 aimed at changing the internationally recognised disputed status of the territory”.
- **China:**

- China said that it did not recognise the **“so-called union territory of Ladakh set up unilaterally and illegally by India”**, and the western section of the China-India border has always belonged to China.
- **United States:**
 - It expressed **concern over detentions and restrictions in J&K**, but also called on all parties to maintain peace and stability along the **Line of Control**, including **“taking firm and resolute steps”** to combat cross-border terrorism.
- **European Union:**
 - It called on **India and Pakistan to reopen dialogue**, and reiterated the grouping’s backing for a bilateral solution on Kashmir.
- **Russia:**
 - Russia **underlined that the changes were carried out “within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of India”**. Moscow also stressed the “bilateral” nature of the J&K issue and mentioned the **Simla Agreement (1972)** and **Lahore Declaration (1999)**.

Way Forward

- A **10-year strategy for 3Es (education, employment and employability)** should be deployed for uplifting Kashmir.
- The plan for a **‘zero-terror incident’** in J&K has been in force since 2020 and will be successful by 2026.
- The **Gandhian path of non-violence and peace** should be adopted to solve the legitimacy crisis in Kashmir.
- The government can mitigate the challenges emanating out of Action on article 370 by launching a **comprehensive outreach programme to all Kashmiris**.
- In this context, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's version of **Kashmiriyat, Insaniyat, and Jamhooriyat (inclusivity culture of Kashmir, humanitarianism and democracy)** for Kashmir solution, should become a cornerstone of the forces of reconciliation in the State.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Years’ Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Siachen Glacier is situated to the (2020)

- (a) East of Aksai Chin
- (b) East of Leh
- (c) North of Gilgit
- (d) North of Nubra Valley

Ans: (d)

Q. Which one of the following is the largest (areawise) Lok Sabha constituency? (2008)

- (a) Kangra
- (b) Ladakh
- (c) Kachchh
- (d) Bhilwara

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. To what extent is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, bearing marginal note “Temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir”, temporary? Discuss The future prospects of this provision in the context of Indian polity. (2016)

Q. Analyze internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard. **(2020)**

Q. The banning of 'Jamaat-e-islami' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over-ground workers (OGWs) in assisting terrorist organizations. Examine the role played by OGWs in assisting terrorist organizations in insurgency affected areas. Discuss measures to neutralize the influence of OGWs. **(2019)**

Global River Cities Alliance: NMCG

For Prelims: The [National Mission for Clean Ganga, River Cities Alliance \(RCA\)](#), [COP28](#), Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), [Namami Gange](#), [Environment \(Protection\) Act \(EPA\), 1986](#).

For Mains: The National Mission for Clean Ganga, Environmental pollution and degradation, Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [National Mission for Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#), has launched the **Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)** at COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

- During the event the NMCG also signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with the **Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI)**, representing **124 cities/towns situated along the banks of the Mississippi River**, the United States.
- The NMCG has signed the MoCP on behalf of the **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**.

What is the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)?

- **About:**
 - The GRCA is an **international coalition of cities and countries dedicated to the conservation, sustainable management, and protection of river systems worldwide.**
 - The alliance encompasses **a diverse array of countries and river cities**, fostering partnerships among key nations like **India, Egypt, Netherlands, Denmark, Ghana, Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, and others.**
 - GRCA's membership extends to **cover 275+ river-cities across 11 countries**, demonstrating a substantial global reach and influence.
- **Objective:**
 - It will serve as a platform for **collaboration, knowledge exchange**, and concerted efforts among various stakeholders, including governments, cities, financial institutions, and environmental organizations..

What is the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI)?

- The **MRCTI was created in 2012** to provide an influential voice for the **Mississippi River**, dramatically increasing demand for effective river protection, restoration, and management in Washington, DC.

- It addresses matters of mutual concern, including river water quality and habitat restoration, flooding and floodplain issues, river-focused recreation, sustainable economies, and celebration of the River culture and history.

What is River Cities Alliance (RCA)?

▪ About:

- The RCA is a **joint initiative of the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) & the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**, with a vision to connect river cities and focus on sustainable river centric development.
- The Alliance focuses on **three broad themes-** Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- Beginning with **30 member cities in November 2021**, the Alliance has expanded to 110 river cities across India and one international member city from Denmark.

▪ Objective:

- The RCA intends to facilitate **knowledge exchange (online) for Indian cities** to learn new practices and approaches for urban river management.
- It will also be an opportunity for international cities to learn about experiences in Indian cities, which may be relevant to their contexts.

What is the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)?

▪ About:

- On **12th August 2011**, the NMCG was listed as a **society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- It acted as the implementation arm of the **National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)** which was constituted under the provisions of the **[Environment \(Protection\) Act \(EPA\), 1986](#)**.
 - NGRBA was dissolved in 2016 and replaced by the **National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection, and Management of River Ganga**.

▪ Objective:

- The objective of the NMCG is to **reduce pollution and ensure the rejuvenation of the Ganga River**.
 - **[Namami Gange](#)** is one of the Coveted Programmes of NMCG to clean Ganga.
- This can be achieved by promoting intersectoral coordination for comprehensive planning & management and maintaining minimum ecological flow in the river, with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally **[sustainable development](#)**.

▪ Organization Structure:

- The Act envisages a five-tier structure at the national, state, and district levels to take measures for prevention, control, and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga as below:
 - National Ganga Council under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
 - Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation).
 - National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
 - State Ganga Committees
 - District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

What are the Other Initiatives for River Rejuvenation in India?

- **Ganga Action Plan:** It was the first River Action Plan that was taken up by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 1985, to improve the water quality by the interception, diversion, and treatment of domestic sewage.
 - The National River Conservation Plan is an extension to the **[Ganga Action Plan](#)**. It aims at cleaning the Ganga River under the Ganga Action Plan phase 2.

- **National Water Mission (2010):** It ensures integrated water resource management leading to water conservation, less wastage, and equitable distribution forming better policies.
- **Clean Ganga Fund:** In 2014, it was formed to clean up the Ganga, set up waste treatment plants, and conserve of biotic diversity of the river.
- **Bhuvan-Ganga Web App:** It ensures the involvement of the public in monitoring of pollution entering into the river Ganga.
- **Ban on Waste Disposal:** In 2017, the [National Green Tribunal](#) banned the disposal of any waste in the Ganga.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2014)

1. Animal Welfare Board of India is established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body.
3. National Ganga River Basin Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Discuss the Namami Gange and National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) programmes and causes of mixed results from the previous schemes. What quantum leaps can help preserve the river Ganga better than incremental inputs? **(2015)**

Merit Over Reservation in Appointments of Law Officers

For Prelims: [Article 16\(4\)](#), [Reservation in India](#), [Article 16\(1\)](#), [Right to Equality](#), [Article 14](#), [Scheduled Caste](#), [Scheduled Tribe](#), [Minorities](#), [High Court of Madras](#), Uberrima Fides, Advocate General

For Mains: Reservation Policy and Its Implication Over Social Equality.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Madras High Court** ruled that the rule of reservation need not be followed in the appointment of law officers.

- The court held that merit must be the sole criterion for such appointments as the government is duty-bound to engage only the most proficient, competent and capable lawyers to represent it before the courts of law.

What are the Key Points of the Verdict?

- The verdict was delivered while dismissing a public interest litigation petition filed in 2017 insisting upon transparency and adequate representation for **women**, the **Scheduled Caste**, the **Scheduled Tribe** and the **minorities** in the appointment of law officers.
 - The petitioner highlighted that the **Appointment of Law Officers** of the **High Court of Madras** had failed to provide **vertical** as well as **horizontal reservation**.
- The **Division Bench** has stated that the relationship between an advocate and their client is one of active **confidence** and **trust** and is governed by the **doctrine of uberrima fides**.
 - The relationship between the government and the law officer is purely professional and not that of a master and a servant.
- The **law officers are not appointed to a civil post** nor are they employees of the government. Therefore, it cannot be held that reservation needs to be provided while appointing law officers by the government.
- The court suggested that the invitation for applications should be inclusive, allowing the government to select highly competent and meritorious lawyers as law officers.

Doctrine of Uberrima Fides:

- The **doctrine of Uberrima Fides** is a Latin phrase that **translates to “utmost good faith”**. It requires the advocate to act in the best interests of the client.

What are the Rules/Judgements Related to Reservation in Public Employment?

- According to Office Memorandum issued by the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) in 2021** the **rule of reservation** must be applied even to **contractual** as well as **temporary appointments** barring those that were to last for less than **45 days**.
- **The Supreme Court** in **Indra Sawhney's case, 1992** ruled that providing reservations for certain **services and positions** might not be advisable for the performance of duties.
 - The post of a **law officer** was one such position that must be exempt from the rule of reservation.
- In 2022, Justices **Nageswara Rao, Sanjiv Khanna, and B.R. Gavai** issued a ruling emphasizing that state governments must provide **measurable data** to justify reservation policies for the promotion of candidates belonging to **SC and STs**.
 - The court upheld the requirement for state authorities to support their decisions on promoting **SC/ST** candidates with concrete and measurable evidence.
- **Constitutional Provisions Governing Reservation in India:**
 - **Articles 15(4)** and **16(4)** of the Constitution enabled the State and Central Governments to reserve seats in government services for the members of the **SC** and **ST**.
 - Constitutional **81st Amendment Act, 2000** inserted **Article 16 (4B)** which enables the state to fill the unfilled vacancies of a year which are reserved for **SCs/STs** in the succeeding year, thereby nullifying the ceiling of **50%** reservation on the total number of vacancies of that year.
 - **Article 335** of the constitution says that the claims of **STs** and **STs** shall be taken into consideration consistently with the maintenance of efficacy of the administration.
- **Advocate General**
 - **Under Article 165** of the Constitution of India the **Governor of each State shall appoint a person who is qualified to be appointed as a Judge of a High Court to**

be Advocate General for the State.

- **The Advocate General** is the **Highest legal officer** in the state in India.
 - He possesses the **complete authority** to present himself in any court within the state.
 - He **lacks voting privileges** in the proceedings of the **state legislature** or any committees initiated by the state legislature. However, he does retain the **right to speak** and **participate** in these proceedings.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements :

1. Attorney General of India and Solicitor General of India are the only officers of the Government who are allowed to participate in the meetings of the Parliament of India.
2. According to the Constitution of India, the Attorney General of India submits his resignation when the Government which appointed him resigns.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: D

Mains

Q. Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. **(2018)**

ASI's Stance on Religious Practices at Monuments

For Prelims: [Archaeological Survey of India](#), [Indian Heritage Sites](#)

For Mains: Balancing Heritage and Worship, Issues Related to Heritage Conservation in India, Solutions For Effective Heritage Management

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

A recent report on '**Issues relating to Untraceable Monuments and Protection of Monuments in**

India presented by a [parliament committee](#) recommends significant changes in the [Archaeological Survey of India's \(ASI\)](#) approach towards religious activities at protected monuments.

- Earlier, in May 2022, prayers at the 8th century [Martand Sun Temple in Jammu and Kashmir](#) sparked concerns from the ASI, operating under the Ministry of Culture, citing a violation of regulations.

What is the Current Policy on Worship at ASI Monuments?

- As of now, the ASI allows worship and rituals only at monuments where such traditions were **ongoing at the time the ASI took custody**.
 - The best-known example of a living ASI monument is the [Taj Mahal](#) where namaz is held every Friday.
 - Other notable living monuments include **three mosques in Kannauj, the Roman Catholic Church in Meerut, the Nila Mosque in Delhi's Hauz Khas Village and several Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh**.
- This restriction aims to preserve the historical and cultural integrity of the monuments.
- No religious rituals can be conducted at **non-living monuments** where there has been no continuity of worship since it became an ASI-protected site.
 - The policy decision prohibits the revival of worship in cases where it was not in practice at the time of protection or has been abandoned for an extended period.
- Out of the **3,693 centrally protected monuments** and archaeological sites managed by the ASI, around a **fourth (820) include places of worship**, while the rest are considered non-living monuments where no new religious rituals can be started or conducted.
 - These sites encompass a diverse range of religious structures, such as temples, mosques, dargahs, and churches.
- The Martand Sun Temple, commissioned by **King Lalitaditya Muktapida of the Karkota dynasty, was once a thriving place of worship**. However, it was destroyed in the 14th century.
 - ASI took control in the 20th century for conservation, **no puja or Hindu ritual was being held there**. Recent pujas in 2022, led by devotees, were deemed a **violation of ASI norms for non-living monuments**.

What are the Committee's Recommendations on Worship at ASI Monuments?

- **Recommendations:**
 - The committee suggests exploring the possibility of permitting prayers and worship at ASI-protected monuments with religious significance.
 - This potential shift in policy raises questions about its implications for various religious sites.
 - Recommends that the Ministry of Culture and ASI conduct surveys to identify monuments promptly and make the results public, stressing the importance of transparency and accountability in addressing critical issues related to monument protection.
- **Concerns Against the Committee's Recommendations:**
 - Allowing religious activities at protected monuments **may pose a threat to the integrity, authenticity and historical value of the monuments**, as they may be subjected to alterations, additions, modifications or damage by the devotees or the authorities.
 - Allowing religious activities at protected monuments may also create conflicts and **disputes among different religious groups**, who may claim ownership or rights over the monuments, or object to the activities of other groups.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under **the Ministry of Culture**, is the **premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage** of the nation.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.

- Its activities **include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance** of protected monuments etc.
- It was **founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham**- the first Director-General of ASI. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the **“Father of Indian Archaeology”**.
- It oversees all archaeological undertakings within the nation by the [Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, of 1958](#).

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q.1 Safeguarding the Indian Art Heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. (2018)

Q.2 Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss. (2020)

AMRIT Technology

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [Ministry of Jal Shakti](#) has shed light on the progress of the [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) and the **Arsenic and Metal Removal by Indian Technology (AMRIT)**.

What is AMRIT Technology?

- The technology was developed by the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Madras**. It is designed for the **removal of arsenic and metal ions** from water, addressing water quality issues.
- The technology utilizes **nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide**, which selectively removes **arsenic** when water passes through it.
- AMRIT is applicable for both **domestic and community-level water purification**.
- The technology aligns with the broader goals of the **Jal Jeevan Mission**, which aims to provide safe and potable tap water to rural households in India.
- The technology has been recommended by the ['Standing Committee'](#) of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation for consideration in addressing water and sanitation challenges.

Note

- Arsenic is a natural component of the earth's crust and is widely distributed throughout the environment in the **air, water and land**. It is **highly toxic in its inorganic form**.
- Long-term exposure to arsenic from drinking water and food can cause **cancer and skin lesions**. Chronic poisoning of arsenic can cause **Blackfoot disease (BFD)**, which affects the blood vessels in the lower limbs.

What is the Jal Jeevan Mission?

▪ About:

- Jal Jeevan Mission, launched in 2019, is envisioned to **provide safe and adequate drinking water** through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India by [Sustainable Development Goal- 6 \(Clean Water and Sanitation for all\)](#).
- It envisages a supply of **55 liters of water per person per day** to every rural household through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.
- The Government of India also launched the [Jal Jeevan Mission \(Urban\)](#) which has been designed to provide universal coverage of water supply through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns of India.

▪ Objectives

- Securing tap and sewer connections.
- Rejuvenation of water bodies.
- Creating a circular water economy.

▪ Progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission:

- **In August 2019, only 16.8% of rural households had tap water connections. By December 2023, this increased to around 71.51%.**
- All 378 arsenic-affected habitations awaiting tap water supply reported to have received safe drinking water through Community Water Purification Plants (CWPPs).

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. What is water stress? How and why does it differ regionally in India? (2019)

Chandrayaan-3 Propulsion Module Returns to Earth's Orbit

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, scientists successfully brought the [Propulsion Module \(PM\)](#) of the [Chandrayaan-3 mission](#), which brought the [Vikram lander](#) within **100 km** of the [Moon's surface](#) before detaching.

- This historic event involved a controlled descent to the [lunar surface](#) and a successful return to [Earth orbit](#).

What is Mission Chandrayan?

- India has launched a total of three Chandrayaan Missions i.e., **Chandrayan-1, Chandrayaan-2 and Chandrayan-3.**
- **Chandrayaan-1:**
 - India's **first mission to the Moon** was **Chandrayaan-1** launched successfully in **2008**. It was designed to orbit the Moon and make observations with instruments on board.
 - **Key Findings of Chandrayaan-1:**
 - Confirmed presence of **lunar water**.
 - Evidence of **lunar caves** formed by an ancient lunar lava flow.
 - **Past tectonic activity** was found on the lunar surface.
 - The faults and fractures discovered could be features of **past interior tectonic**

activity coupled with meteorite impacts.

▪ Chandrayan-2:

- **Chandrayaan-2** is an integrated **3-in-1 spacecraft** consisting of an orbiter of the **Moon**, **Vikram (after Vikram Sarabhai)** the lander and **Pragyan (wisdom)** the rover, all equipped with scientific instruments to study the moon.
- **Launched: 22th July 2019**
 - **Lander Vikram:** It remains stationary after touching down, and mainly studies the moon's atmosphere and seismic activity.
 - **Rover Pragyan:** The Rover, a **six-wheeled solar-powered vehicle**, detaches itself and slowly crawls on the surface, making observations and collecting data.
 - Chandrayaan-2's lander had **crashed**, or made a **hard landing**, on the **Moon's surface** because of its **high velocity**.
 - However, its **orbiter** is functioning very well and this will communicate with **Chandrayaan-3 lander**.

▪ Chandrayaan-3:

- It was **India's third lunar mission** and second attempt at achieving a **soft landing** on the **moon's surface**.
- **Launched:** July 14, 2023.
- **Objectives:**
 - To demonstrate Safe and Soft Landing on Lunar Surface
 - To demonstrate Rover roving on the moon
 - To conduct In-situ scientific experiments.
- It consists of an indigenous **Lander module (LM)**, **Propulsion module (PM)** and a Rover with an objective of developing and demonstrating new technologies required for Interplanetary missions.

What is the Chandrayaan-3 Propulsion Module?

- **Chandrayaan-3:** It utilized a lightweight **Propulsion Module** for the **lander's journey** to the Moon instead of a complete orbiter.
- **SpectroPolarimetry of Habitable Planet Earth (SHAPE):** The **Chandrayaan-3 propulsion module** carried a single instrument called **SHAPE**.
 - It was an experimental payload designed to study **Earth's characteristics** that make it habitable, aiming to identify habitable exoplanets.
- **Pragyaan Rover:** The **propulsion module** separated from the **lander**, which carried the **Pragyaan rover**. It was anticipated to orbit the Moon for an additional **six months**, with **SHAPE** observing Earth.

How Does the Propulsion Module Return to Earth Orbit?

- The experiment allows **ISRO** to work towards developing a **software module** to plan going forward.
- Taking **fuel availability** and **safety** into account, designed the best trajectory for the Earth return.
- The **SHAPE payload** is operated whenever Earth is visible, including a special operation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

The Mangalyaan launched by ISRO

1. is also called the Mars Orbiter Mission
2. made India the second country to have a spacecraft orbit the Mars after USA
3. made India the only country to be successful in making its spacecraft orbit the Mars in its very first attempt

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. Discuss India's achievements in the field of Space Science and Technology. How the application of this technology has helped India in its socio-economic development? (2016)

India Nears Kala Azar Elimination

Source: IE

Why in News?

India stands on the brink of **eliminating visceral leishmaniasis**, commonly known as **kala azar**. With a marked decline in reported cases and deaths, the nation has come close to meeting the **elimination target set by the World Health Organization (WHO)**.

- Bangladesh, India's neighbour, was the **first country validated by the WHO for eliminating kala azar as a public health problem**.

What is Kala-Azar?

- **About:**
 - **Visceral leishmaniasis commonly known as kala-azar**, is a **slow-progressing indigenous disease** caused by a protozoan parasite of genus *Leishmania*.
 - It is also known as **Black Fever or Dumdum Fever**.
 - In India ***Leishmania donovani*** is the only parasite causing this disease.
- **Transmission and Symptoms:**
 - It is transmitted by sandflies. Sandflies of the **genus *Phlebotomus argentipes*** are the only known vectors of kala-azar in India.
 - It causes **fever, weight loss, and spleen and liver enlargement**. If left untreated, it can be fatal in 95% of cases.
- **Recorded Cases in India:**
 - India documented **530 cases and four deaths in 2023**, a decline from previous years.
 - Additionally, there were 286 cases of **post-kala azar dermal leishmaniasis (PKDL)**.
- **Post Kala-azar Dermal Leishmaniasis (PKDL):**
 - This condition arises when *Leishmania donovani* infiltrates and thrives within skin cells, resulting in the formation of skin lesions.
 - In some instances of kala-azar, **PKDL emerges after treatment**, but now it is believed that PKDL might occur without going through the visceral stage. However, more data is needed to understand how PKDL develops.
 - The visceral stage refers to the initial phase of visceral leishmaniasis (kala-azar), where the **parasite affects internal organs**.
- **Treatment:**

- In India, the primary treatment for kala-azar involves administering **injectable liposomal amphotericin B**.
 - For PKDL, the standard treatment consists of **12 weeks of oral miltefosine**, with the dosage adjusted based on the patient's age and weight.
- **Strategies for Elimination in India:**
 - **Effective Spraying:** Rigorous monitoring of **indoor residual spraying** to curb sandfly breeding and disease spread.
 - **Wall Plastering:** Using **Gerrard soil for wall plastering** to minimize sandfly breeding areas.
 - **Treatment Compliance:** Ensuring completion of PKDL treatment through the **ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) network**.

Note

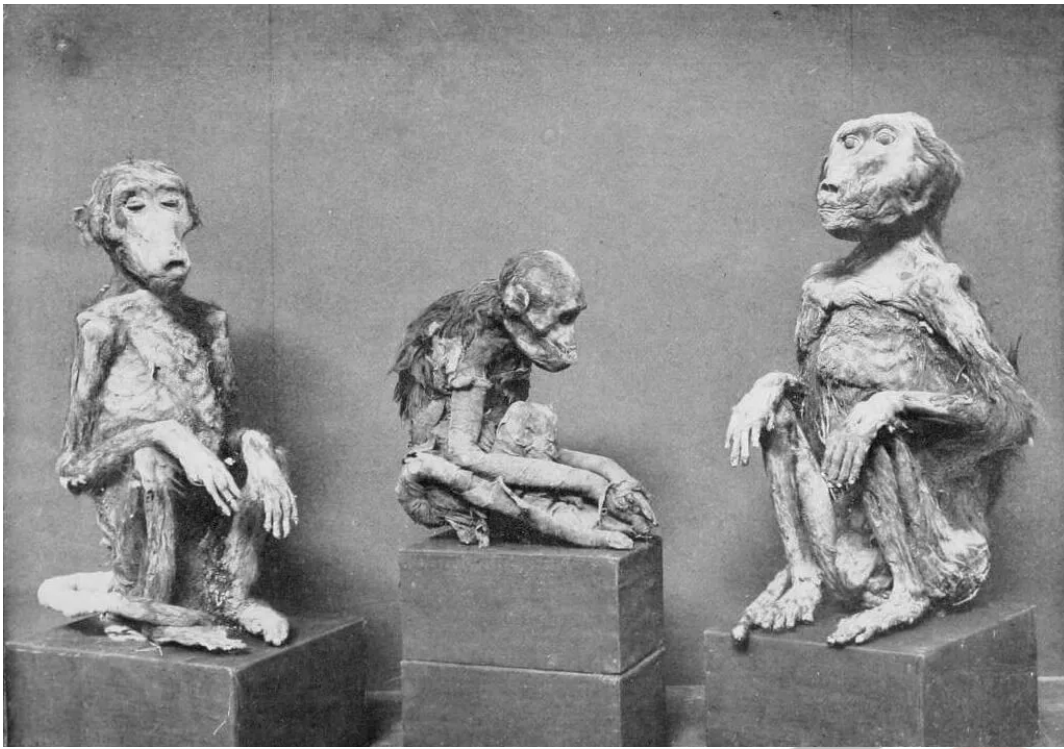
WHO has set a target of **2030 to eliminate Kala-azar**. The **WHO's Neglected Tropical Diseases Road map** also includes this target.

- Government of India launched a centrally sponsored **Kala-azar control Programme in 1990-91**. **The National Health Policy (2002)** envisaged kala-azar Elimination by 2010 which was revised later to 2015. Now **Kala-azar is targeted for elimination by 2023 in India**.

Mummified Baboons

The origin of **mummified baboons** in Egypt has puzzled scientists for over a century. Recently scientists uncovered the secrets behind these ancient relics using mitochondrial DNA.

- DNA analysis traced the baboons' origin to the ancient **city of Adulis, in present-day coastal Eritrea**.
- The study shed light on the potential location of the **lost city of Punt**, a significant trading partner with ancient Egypt, and Adulis.
- The findings emphasized the historical trade relationships between Egypt and Adulis, highlighting the **Red Sea** as a crucial node in **trade history between India, Egypt, and Europe**.
- **Papio anubis and Papio hamadryas** are both species of baboons. Baboons are Old World monkeys that are part of the genus Papio.
 - **Papio anubis** is the most broadly distributed baboon species, ranging through most of **central sub-Saharan Africa**.
 - **Papio hamadryas** is found on the African continent in the area of the southern Red Sea, in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea.
 - The **IUCN Red List** rates them "**Lower Risk, Least Concern**."



Male Mosquitoes with Bloodsucking Behavior

Recently, Scientists unearthed the **oldest-known mosquito fossils**, dating back 130 million years, has revealed the **bloodsucking behavior in ancient males**. These fossils provide insights into the evolutionary history of mosquitoes and their role as **disease vectors**.

- The fossils represent **two male mosquitoes from the Cretaceous Period**, possessing **elongated piercing-sucking mouthparts** typically seen only in females.
 - This discovery suggests that originally all mosquitoes were **hematophagous (blood-eaters), regardless of their gender**.
 - The male mosquitoes' mouthparts were shorter than those of modern female mosquitoes.
- Mosquitoes are blood-feeders and **transmit parasites and diseases to their hosts**, including [malaria](#), [yellow fever](#), [Zika fever](#), and [dengue](#).
- The researchers hypothesize that mosquitoes evolved from insects that did not consume blood, with their mouthparts initially adapted for **piercing plants to access nutritious fluids**.
 - The appearance of flowering plants during the Cretaceous Period may have played a role in the divergence of **feeding behaviour between male and female mosquitoes**.
- Mosquitoes likely originated millions of years earlier than the discovered fossils, with molecular evidence suggesting their existence during the [Jurassic Period](#).

Military Exercise “VINBAX-2023”

- The [Indian Armed Forces](#) contingent reached **Hanoi, Vietnam** to take part in the **fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023**.
- Exercise [VINBAX](#) was instituted in **2018** and the **first edition** was conducted at **Jabalpur**,

Madhya Pradesh.

- It is an **annual training** event conducted alternatively in **India** and **Vietnam**.
- **Aim:**
 - The exercise is to foster **collaborative partnership, promote inter- operability and share best practices** between the two sides under Chapter VII of [United Nations Charter](#) on [Peacekeeping Operations](#).
 - The exercise will be conducted as a **Command Post Exercise cum Field Training Exercise** with focus on deployment and employment of an Engineer Company and a Medical Team.
- Ideas will be exchanged on modern methods to construct **roads, culverts, helipads, ammunition shelter** and observation posts in operational areas.

Read More: [EX VINBAX 2022](#)

Project ARTHA Ganga

- **Arth Ganga** is an initiative added to the [Namami Ganga Program](#) launched by the **Government in 2014**.
 - It is a **sustainable** and **viable economic development model** to strengthen the **river-people connection** through an **economic bridge**.
 - It was decided that the **Namami Gange mission** should lead the concept of Arth Ganga with the involvement of all stakeholders. It was added as a vertical of the Namami Ganga Program, in addition to 4 verticals:
 - **Nirmal Ganga, Aviral Ganga, Jan Ganga and Gyan Ganga.**
- **Six pillars of Arth-Ganga** identified are
 - Promotion of [Natural Framing](#) on the **5 km** band on either side of **River Ganga**.
 - **Monetisation** and reuse of Treated water and sludge from the STPs;
 - Improvement of Livelihood opportunities, particularly for **women**;
 - [Promotion of Tourism](#) and [Cultural heritage](#)
 - People's Participation and Capacity Building
 - Empowering **local administration** for improved **water governance**.

Read More: [Arth Ganga Project](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/12-12-2023/print>