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Pakistan, Afghanistan sign truce agreement in Doha

Both sides decided to establish mechanisms for lasting peace and stability, a statement said after talks between the Defence Ministers; the two neighbours also agreed to hold follow-up meetings

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and setting up of “mechanisms” to ensure lasting peace after days of violent clashes along the border that left several soldiers, civilians, and terrorists dead on both sides, officials said on Sunday.

The breakthrough came following negotiations between Pakistan’s Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Afghanistan’s Acting Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob in Doha, facilitated by Qatar and Türkiye, according to a statement issued by Qatar’s Foreign Ministry.

“During the negotiation, both sides agreed to an immediate ceasefire and establishment of mechanisms to consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two countries,” the statement read.

The two neighbours also agreed to hold “follow-up meetings” in the com-



Afghanistan’s Acting Defence Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid and Pakistan’s Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif after signing a ceasefire agreement in Doha on Sunday. REUTERS

ing days to ensure the “implementation” and “sustainability” of the truce “in a reliable and sustainable manner” to achieve security and stability in both countries, it said. The development comes amid heightened tensions along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, triggered by cross-border clashes after alleged Pakistani air strikes near Kabul last week.

The Doha talks began on Saturday with Pakistan urging the Afghan Taliban authorities to take “verifiable action” against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which Islamabad accuses of launching cross-

border terrorist attacks from Afghan soil.

The Foreign Office, in a statement on Saturday, said Pakistan had stressed the need for the Afghan authorities to honour their “commitments to the international community” and to address Islamabad’s “legitimate security concerns” by taking verifiable action against terrorist entities. “Pakistan appreciates the mediation efforts of Qatar and hopes these discussions contribute to peace and stability in the region,” it said.

Relations between the countries have remained strained since 2023.

Islamabad has been re-

peatedly raising concerns over the use of Afghan soil by militants carrying out cross-border attacks.

The situation further deteriorated following repeated terrorist attacks by TTP, including one in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Orakzai district recently, which claimed the lives of 11 military personnel, including a Lieutenant-Colonel and a Major.

The Foreign Office on Wednesday announced that a temporary ceasefire had been agreed with Afghanistan for the next 48 hours amid the recent border hostilities. Later on Friday, the ceasefire was extended.

However, hours after Islamabad and Kabul extended their two-day ceasefire, Pakistan launched fresh air strikes targeting terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan late on Friday. Three Afghan cricketers were among several people killed in the strikes, which followed a terror attack at a military installation in North Waziristan, claimed by TTP.

GS Paper 2 – India and Neighbourhood Relations / International Security English Summary :

After border clashes killing soldiers and civilians, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on an immediate cease-fire mediated by Qatar and Türkiye. They will create mechanisms for lasting peace and curb terror attacks by TTP. The talks show regional diplomacy balancing security and stability.

हिन्दी सारांश :

कई दिनों की सीमा झड़पों के बाद पाकिस्तान और अफगानिस्तान ने कतार में तुरन्त संघर्ष विराम पर सहमति की। दोनों देश शांति के लिए संयुक्त तंत्र बनाएँगे और आतंकी गतिविधियों को रोकने के लिए साझा कदम उठाएँगे।

→ संबंध - भारत की पड़ोसी नीति और दक्षिण एशिया की सुरक्षा गतिशीलता।



Into the Periyar: With water levels nearing full capacity, surplus water is being released from the Mullaperiyar dam in Idukki, Kerala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Monsoon wreaks havoc in Idukki, Theni, more water released from Mullaperiyar

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/
THENI

The intensifying northeast monsoon claimed its first life in Kerala's mountainous Idukki district on Sunday, as intense overnight rain inundated roads and homes, swept away parked vehicles, and triggered mudslides. Traffic came to a halt while power lines and mobile phone networks were hit.

The intense rain also wreaked havoc in Tamil Nadu's Theni district bordering Idukki, with traffic being affected on the district's Kumily inter-State ghat road due to a mudslide.

With water being released from the Mullaperiyar reservoir into the Periyar river since Saturday, villages along the river in Kerala reported flooding. At 7 p.m. on Sunday, the water level in the dam stood at 139.15 ft. The inflow into the dam was around 9,521 cusecs and outflow was around 8,551 cusecs, officials said.

Residents alerted

The Kerala government had warned residents living downstream of the Mullaperiyar dam to exercise caution.

Shaji Kurishumood, a resident of Vallakkadavu, abutting the banks of the Periyar, said the release of water from the Mullaperi-

Villages along the river in Kerala reported flooding; rain also claimed life of a man in Idukki

yar dam had inundated at least five homes in the locality. Residents at Ayyappancoil, Vikas Nagar, Karuppupalam, Manjumala, Aatooram, Kadashikkada-vu and Vandiperiyar were also facing flooding.

The rain also claimed the life of Parappallil Thomas alias Thankachan, 66 in Idukki.

In Theni, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department declared the Suruli waterfalls off limits for tourists.

He was killed when his two-wheeler was caught under falling debris on the Kumily-Anavilasom-Kattappana road near Vellarankunnu. The district police identified the deceased as Parappallil Thomas alias Thankachan, a resident.

Idukki's Kumily panchayat was among the worst hit, with neighbourhoods in Onnam Mile, Atta Palam, Kumily town, Periyar Colony, Chelimala, Vallyakandan and Anavachal reporting flooding.

A resident, Jaison Thekkady, told *The Hindu* that the rising floodwater surprised scores of residents, forcing them to move to upper floors or houses of relatives on higher ground.

The rain also disrupted traffic along the Gudalloor-Kozhikode road passing through Manimoola in Kerala's Malappuram district. The heavy spell caused the water levels to rise significantly in the Karakodam, Kalakkad and Athithode Rivers in the district. Overnight rain caused minimal flooding in Kochi, inconveniencing early morning commuters, including two-wheeler riders.

Kerala Revenue Minister K. Rajan requested citizens to exercise caution and avoid driving during the night along hilly routes till October 24. He said the latest spell of intense rain appeared isolated and not widespread, as was the case in 2018 and 2019.

The government had warned fisherfolk from venturing into sea.

Man washed away

In Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu, Ramachandran, 49, a farmer, was reportedly washed away in a flash flood when crossing a causeway at Anaithalaiaaru with two of his relatives on a two-wheeler on Friday night. A search was under way.

In Theni, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department declared the Suruli waterfalls off limits for tourists. Former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and his son, O.P. Ravindhranath, toured the rain-hit localities in Theni.

GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management / Environment

English Summary :

Heavy northeast-monsoon rainfall caused floods and mudslides in Idukki (Kerala) and Theni (Tamil Nadu). The Mullaperiyar dam discharge led to flooding in Periyar valley villages. The Kerala government issued warnings and coastal advisories; casualties and infrastructure damage were reported.

→ Relevance – climate-induced extreme weather events and inter-State water-sharing issues.

हिन्दी सारांश :

उत्तर-पूर्व मानसून की तेज बारिश से केरल के इडुक्की और तमिलनाडु के थेनी ज़िलों में बाढ़ और भूस्खलन हुआ।

मुल्लापेरियार बांध से पानी छोड़ने से पेरियार घाटी के गाँव डूब गए। राज्य सरकार ने निवासियों को सतर्क रहने को कहा है।

→ संबंध – आपदा प्रबंधन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन से उत्पन्न चरम घटनाएँ।

Ladakh bodies agree to resume talks with MHA in New Delhi on Oct. 22

Hopeful of result-oriented talks in a positive environment, says co-chairman of Leh Apex Body; meeting to seek Statehood, Sixth Schedule, justice for Sept. 24 victims, release of detainees: KDA

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Ladakh's two key socio-political amalgams, the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), on Sunday decided to resume talks with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on October 22 in New Delhi on granting of Statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The LAB and the KDA had withdrawn from the talks scheduled for October 6 against the backdrop of the deaths of four civilians in firing by security forces during protests over the demands in Leh and the arrest of activist Sonam Wangchuk on September 24 and September 26 respectively.

In a fresh outreach, officials of the MHA on Sunday reached out to the LAB for resumption of talks. "We welcome the swift initiative of the MHA. Officials of the MHA conveyed to us about subcommittee talks on Oc-



A view of a deserted road in Leh after four civilians were killed during violent protests for Statehood on September 24. FILE PHOTO

tober 22 in New Delhi. The LAB and KDA have decided to participate in the talks. We are hopeful of result-oriented talks in a positive environment," Chering Dorjay Lakruk, Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) president and co-chairman of the LAB, said.

'With open heart'

He said the LAB and KDA will focus on the key demands of Statehood and Sixth Schedule. "We hope the government will discuss the demands with an open heart," Mr. Lakruk.

The delegation to hold talks with the subcommit-

tee will be headed by LAB chairman Thupstan Chhewang and KDA's Qamar Ali Akhoun, Asgar Ali Karbalaim and Sajjad Kargili, besides Ladakh MP Haji Haneefa. "We are meeting for Statehood, Sixth Schedule, justice for September 24 victims, and release of detainees, including Sonam Wangchuk. We believe only genuine dialogue can restore trust and fulfil Ladakh's aspirations," Mr. Kargili said.

The Ladakh-MHA talks hit a dead end in September after Mr. Wangchuk organised a three-week hunger strike to press for early

resumption of talks over Statehood and Sixth Schedule. Locals, including supporters of Mr. Wangchuk, hit the streets on September 24 over the MHA's delay in announcing talks and resulted in violence, which left four locals dead and around 90 injured.

This was followed by imposition of curfew-like restrictions, snapping of Internet services and rounding up of supporters of Mr. Wangchuk and the LAB. In the past 10 days, several measures were taken by the Ladakh administration, including release of the detained youth, restoring Internet services and withdrawing of restrictions, to pave the way for talks.

Ladakh was carved out as a Union Territory in 2019 from the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. Since then, locals have been demanding special safeguards on land, language, and culture under the Sixth Schedule and Statehood.

GS Paper 2 – Governance / Federal Issues / Centre-State Relations

English Summary :

Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance will resume talks with the Home Ministry on Statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh. The move follows recent protests and detentions. The groups seek land, language and cultural safeguards.

हिन्दी सारांश :

लेह एपेक्स बॉडी और कारगिल डेमोक्रेटिक अलायंस राज्य का दर्जा और छठी अनुसूची के अंतर्गत सुरक्षा के लिए गृह मंत्रालय से वार्ता पुनः आरंभ करेंगे।

→ संबंध - संविधानिक संरचना, राज्य-केंद्र संबंध और जनजातीय सुरक्षा।

Adivasi families lack access to basic amenities despite relocation seven years ago

Rohan Premkumar
UDHAGAMANDALAM

Eachanakolly in Gudalur, a Paniya tribal settlement established around seven years ago, typifies the challenges faced by families relocated from the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The Adivasi families were allegedly cheated out of the compensation for relocation by real estate brokers and some Forest Department officials, who moved them to Revenue Department land. As a result, the villagers have been deprived of even electricity and water supply.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, K. Maari, a member of one of the 11 families at Eachanakolly, less than a kilometre away from the boundary of the tiger reserve, said the families had paid a total of ₹32 lakh for around three acres of land identified for them by real estate brokers and Forest Department officials.

“However, only after we parted with the money and constructed our houses did we come to know that the land belonged to the Revenue Department. This means we are denied even basic services,” he said.



Residents of Eachanakolly in Gudalur, a Paniya tribal settlement, have been left without basic amenities. ROHAN PREMKUMAR

And they were not given land documents.

Following complaints by around 21 families, the District Crime Branch registered a case against 10 persons, including a forest ranger, a forester, a lawyer, and real estate brokers.

Similar cases

K. Mahendran, district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Tribal People Association, said the problems faced by the Eachanakolly residents were similar to those of over 100 families relocated from the reserve.

Poor housing, lack of cultivable land, and no amenities marked the ‘golden handshake’ between the Forest Department and the Adivasis.

“This botched reloca-

tion of Adivasi families should serve as a warning for all other communities in the State when it comes to resettlement,” he said.

Mr. Mahendran has approached the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Thanks to his efforts, more than 80 families have been added as victims of the fraud since the FIR was filed. The number of victims now stands at more than 100.

Yet, Mr. Mahendran says justice remains elusive for the communities resettled on revenue land without documents. “It is disgraceful that the original inhabitants have been made landless by settlers and the government policy,” he said.

GS Paper 2 – Welfare of Vulnerable Sections / GS Paper 3 – Environment

English Summary :

Over 100 Paniya tribal families relocated from Mudumalai Reserve were defrauded by brokers and officials, left without land titles, water or electricity. The case highlights rehabilitation failures in conservation policies.

→ Relevance – tribal rights, forest governance and ethical conservation.

हिन्दी सारांश :

मुदुमलाई टाइगर रिज़र्व से स्थानांतरित पानिया आदिवासी परिवारों को ब्रोकरों द्वारा धोखा दिया गया और वे भूमि दस्तावेज़, बिजली एवं पानी से वंचित हैं।

→ संबंध – जनजातीय कल्याण नीति एवं पर्यावरणीय न्याय।

First phase of underwater archaeological survey in Poompuhar completed

N. Sai Charan

CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) has concluded the first phase of an underwater archaeological survey off the coast of Poompuhar in Mayiladuthurai district.

The ancient Sangam-era port city was once known as Kaveripoompattinam. The survey was aimed at identifying the potential archaeological remains submerged in the Bay of Bengal.

Underwater visibility

R. Sivanantham, Joint Director, TNSDA, said a team of 10 divers had carried out the survey, which began on September 20 and continued for 12 days between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. "We restricted the operation to these hours as sunlight is essential for underwater visibility and the sea turns rough in the evening," he said. The team surveyed the seabed up to a depth of 23 metres using advanced marine exploration instruments, including a remotely operated vehicle, side-scan sonar, sub-bottom profiler, and multibeam



Search for evidence: A team of archaeologists and trained divers took part in the survey. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

scanner. These tools helped to map the ocean floor and detect structural anomalies, he said.

The survey was conducted with logistics support from the local fishermen. The team put out to sea on mechanised boats and then used smaller fibre boats to reach survey points.

The TNSDA had conducted a 10-day underwater survey at Korkai in Thoothukudi district in 2022, using Sagar Tara, a coastal research vessel of the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).

TNSDA archaeologists and a four-member team of trained divers from the Indian Maritime University took part in the survey, which was carried out off

the coast between Thirumullaivasal and Neithavasal. The divers and the experts examined the seabed to identify anomalies and determine whether they were natural formations or man-made remains linked to the ancient port city.

'Data being analysed'

Mr. Sivanantham said the team had traced several underwater locations identified by veteran archaeologist S. R. Rao, who had led a similar survey off the Poompuhar coast nearly three decades ago. "We are now analysing the data collected during this phase. The department is planning to carry out one more phase of exploration when the conditions are favourable," he added.

GS Paper 1 – Indian Culture / Archaeology

English Summary :

Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology finished Phase-I underwater survey off Poompuhar coast to trace submerged Sangam-era structures using sonar and ROVs. Data analysis is under way.

→ Relevance – Maritime archaeology and heritage preservation.

हिन्दी सारांश :

तमिलनाडु पुरातत्व विभाग ने पूंपुहार के तट के पास समुद्र में पहले चरण का जल-पुरातात्विक सर्वेक्षण पूरा किया है, जिसमें संगम युग के संरचनाओं के साक्ष्य मिले।

→ संबंध – भारतीय संस्कृति एवं समुद्री पुरातत्व।

GRAP Stage 2 curbs kick in across Delhi as air quality turns ‘very poor’

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has invoked Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across Delhi-NCR as the city's air quality slipped into the “very poor” category, with the AQI crossing the 300 mark.

The move came after the Sub-Committee on GRAP on Saturday reviewed the worsening pollution levels and forecasts by the India Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, which warned of further deterioration in the coming days.

“The AQI of Delhi has shown an increasing trend



A view of the Barapulla area covered with smog as the Air Quality Index deteriorates in New Delhi on October 19, 2025. ANI

since morning and has been recorded as 296 at 4 p.m. and 302 at 7 p.m.,” the CAQM said, directing authorities to implement all Stage II measures with immediate effect, in addition to Stage I actions already in force.

The panel also asked all implementing agencies to

keep strict vigil, particularly on dust mitigation and to ensure compliance with targeted timelines laid down under the comprehensive policy to curb air pollution in NCR.

Under Stage II of GRAP, several curbs and intensified actions include daily mechanical or vacuum

sweeping and water sprinkling on identified roads, preferably before peak traffic hours, to control dust.

Construction and demolition sites face intensified inspections to ensure strict enforcement of dust control measures.

To promote cleaner mobility, the GRAP Stage II mandates augmentation of public transport services through additional CNG and electric buses and increased frequency of metro services, along with differential fare rates to encourage off-peak travel.

Resident welfare associations are required to provide electric heaters to staff to prevent open burning of biomass and solid waste during winters.

GS Paper 3 – Environment / Pollution Control / Governance

English Summary :

The Commission for Air Quality Management activated Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan as Delhi's AQI crossed 300 (“Very Poor”). Measures include dust control, mechanised sweeping and curbs on construction.

हिन्दी सारांश :

दिल्ली-एनसीआर में वायु गुणवत्ता बहुत खराब होने पर क्यूएएम ने जीआरएपी के दूसरे चरण को लागू किया। अब निर्माण गतिविधियों पर नियंत्रण और धूल रोधी उपाय लागू किए जाएंगे।

→ संबंध – पर्यावरण प्रबंधन एवं शहरी शासन।

Modi to face Quad and BRICS leaders at ASEAN summit next week

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India's balancing act between the Quad and BRICS will come to the fore at the upcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Kuala Lumpur from October 26 to 28, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the East Asia Summit (EAS) along with U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

Leaders or representatives of China, Russia, Japan, India, Australia, and New Zealand are expected at the EAS, while Brazil President Lula da Silva and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will attend as observers at the ASEAN-related summits. This means Mr. Modi, if he does travel to Kuala Lumpur

this week, will have the chance to meet all counterparts from the Quad and key founder members of BRICS as well, as India prepares to host both summits next year.

While the External Affairs Ministry has not so far confirmed Mr. Modi's participation, Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan announced last week that Mr. Modi would attend the ASEAN-related summits, including the EAS, and government officials said Mr. Modi was "likely" to attend.

Antithetical groups

India was meant to be the host of the Quad Summit this year, but with India-U.S. tensions overshadowing the past few months, officials have indicated the Quad Summit could be held in 2026.

India will also take over as chair of the BRICS, and host the summit of the H-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Secretary-General of ASEAN Kao Kim Hourn and other dignitaries during the 21st ASEAN-India Summit in Vientiane in 2024. ANI

nation grouping of emerging economies in 2026. India is the only common factor between the two groupings often antithetical to each other, as one includes the U.S. and its allies, while the other includes Russia and China. In addition, Mr. Trump's trade tariffs, threats against India for buying Russian oil, sanctions on Iran (a new BRICS member), and threats to slap 100% tariffs on the BRICS

members that he accuses of backing a common currency to counter the U.S. dollar, have added to the strain.

"The downward trend in global economic growth, uncertainty in investment flows and interest rates, unilateral measures and supply chain disruptions have come to define the current international economic landscape," Sudhakar Dalela, Secretary (Economic Rela-

tions), External Affairs Ministry, told a conference organised by the Chintan Research Foundation in Delhi last week.

"India's BRICS chairship comes at a time when the world is navigating through multiple challenges, particularly affecting the Global South countries," he said, describing India's plans to host the summit in the 20th year of BRICS.

Meanwhile, Indian and American officials working on setting up the meeting between Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit, have also been discussing scheduling the Quad summit, but no date has emerged thus far, a number of diplomatic sources said.

If the U.S.-India-Australia-Japan summit cannot be held this year, as is looking more likely, it will be the second year in a row that India-U.S. tensions would

have derailed New Delhi's plans.

Mr. Modi had invited Quad leaders to a summit in January 2024, timed with Republic Day, but the invitation was declined by then-U.S. President Joe Biden amid a strain over the Pannun case, in which Indian government officials were linked to an assassination plot in the U.S. Mr. Biden subsequently hosted the Quad Summit in September 2024 in the U.S.

Test of resilience

At a closed-door session on the Quad in Delhi this week, organised by the Jindal Global University, which included present and former government officials, experts said Mr. Trump's 'America first' doctrine now posed a "test to Quad resilience".

Tariffs and trade wars "sabotage Quad goals", they said, including supply chain resilience in pharma-

ceuticals and minerals that were meant to de-risk the region from certain geographies.

In addition, the U.S. administration's decisions to withdraw from climate change commitments, slashing aid for vaccine research and specific Quad commitments, including the Cancer Moonshot announced just last year, were another challenge, participants at the discussion held under the Chatham House Rules said.

As a result, while Mr. Modi's visit to Kuala Lumpur is planned primarily for ASEAN-related meetings with South East Asian leaders, including the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), his schedule may also be crowded with discussions on the way forward on the two important groupings India will host in the upcoming months – the Quad and BRICS.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations / Multilateral Groupings

English Summary :

PM Modi is likely to attend the Kuala Lumpur ASEAN and East Asia Summits, meeting leaders from Quad (U.S., Japan, Australia) and BRICS (China, Russia etc.). The article examines India's balancing role between rival blocs amid global trade and security frictions.

हिन्दी सारांश :

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी कुआलालंपुर में आसियान शिखर सम्मेलन में काड और ब्रिक्स दोनों गुटों के नेताओं से मिलेंगे। भारत का संतुलनकारी विदेश नीति रुख इस बैठक में केंद्र बिंदु होगा।

→ संबंध – भारत की विदेश नीति और बहुपक्षीय कूटनीति।

Chandrayaan-2 makes first-ever observations on lunar exosphere: ISRO

The CHACE-2 payload aboard the spacecraft's orbiter showed an increase in total pressure of dayside lunar exosphere when impacted by the sun's coronal mass ejection, says space agency

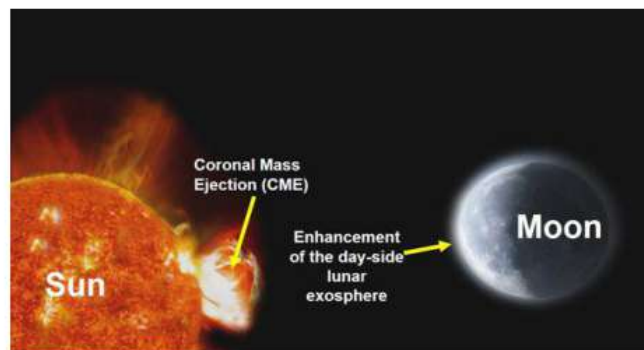
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The lunar orbiter of India's second moon mission, Chandrayaan-2, has made the first-ever observation of the effects of the sun's coronal mass ejection (CME) on the moon.

The Chandra's Atmospheric Composition Explorer-2 (CHACE-2) payload onboard the orbiter had made the observation.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said on Saturday that the observations from CHACE-2 showed an increase in the total pressure of the dayside lunar exosphere (very thin atmosphere) when the CME impacted the moon.

"The total number density (number of neutral atoms or molecules present in an environment per unit volume) derived from these observations showed



Direct impact: An artistic rendition of the Coronal Mass Ejection, or CME, hurled by the sun towards the moon. ISRO.GOV.IN

an increase by more than an order of magnitude. This increase is consistent with earlier theoretical models, which predicted such an effect, but CHACE-2 onboard Chandrayaan-2 has observed such an effect for the first time," the ISRO said.

Rare occurrence

The space agency added that the opportunity to directly observe the effects of the CME on the moon came on a rare occur-

rence, on May 10, 2024, when a series of CMEs were hurled by the sun. "This increased quantity of solar coronal mass that impacted on the moon enhanced the process of knocking off the atoms from the lunar surface, thereby liberating them to the lunar exosphere, which manifested as the enhancement of the total pressure in the sunlit lunar exosphere," it added.

The space agency said that this observation

would provide scientific insight into the understanding of the lunar exosphere and space weather effects on the moon.

Lunar base

"Apart from pushing the edge of our scientific understanding about the moon and the lunar space weather, this observation also indicates the challenges of building scientific bases on the Moon. Lunar base architects need to account for such extreme events, which would temporarily alter the lunar environment, before the effects subside," it said.

Launched on July 22, 2019 using the GSLV-MkIII-M1 rocket, Chandrayaan-2 carried eight experiment payloads. However, the Vikram lander, while attempting to make a soft landing on the moon's surface, lost communication from the lander and the ground stations.

GS Paper Mapping:

- **UPSC GS Paper-3:** Science & Technology – Achievements of Indians in Science and Technology; Indigenization of Technology; Space Technology and its Applications.
- **BPSC GS Paper-5 (Science & Tech Section):** Indian Space Research and Developments.

English Summary:

India's second lunar mission **Chandrayaan-2** has achieved a major scientific milestone.

ISRO announced that the **CHACE-2 (Chandra's Atmospheric Composition Explorer-2)** instrument aboard the orbiter made the **first-ever observation of the lunar exosphere's reaction to a solar coronal mass ejection (CME)**.

During a CME event on **May 10, 2024**, the payload detected a **tenfold increase in total pressure** of the **day-side lunar exosphere** — confirming theoretical predictions about solar impact on lunar atmospheric particles.

This marks the **first recorded evidence of solar space weather affecting the Moon's extremely tenuous atmosphere**.

ISRO noted that the surge was due to **solar particles knocking atoms off the lunar surface**, increasing neutral atom density around the Moon.

The finding improves understanding of **space weather effects** and helps design **future lunar bases**, which will have to withstand such solar interactions.

Chandrayaan-2 was launched on **July 22, 2019** via **GSLV Mk-III**; while its lander Vikram lost contact during descent, the **orbiter continues functioning successfully**.

हिन्दी सारांश (Hindi Summary):

भारत के दूसरे चंद्र मिशन **चंद्रयान-2** ने वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से एक महत्वपूर्ण खोज की है।

इसरो (ISRO) के अनुसार, **CHACE-2 (चंद्रा एटमोस्फेरिक कम्पोज़िशन एक्सप्लोरर-2)** उपकरण ने पहली बार यह अवलोकन किया कि **सूर्य के कोरोनल मास इजेक्शन (CME)** का चंद्रमा के **एक्सोस्फीयर (वायुमंडल की बाहरी परत)** पर क्या प्रभाव पड़ता है।

10 मई 2024 को CME घटना के दौरान चंद्रयान-2 के ऑर्बिटर ने **दिन के समय के एक्सोस्फीयर में कुल दबाव में दस गुना वृद्धि** दर्ज की। यह वैज्ञानिक सिद्धांतों के अनुरूप है कि सूर्य की ऊर्जा चंद्रमा की सतह से परमाणुओं को खींच लेती है। यह अवलोकन दर्शाता है कि **सौर गतिविधियाँ (Space Weather)** चंद्र वातावरण को कैसे प्रभावित करती हैं और भविष्य में **चंद्र बेस निर्माण (Lunar Base Construction)** के लिए यह ज्ञान कितना आवश्यक होगा।

चंद्रयान-2 को **22 जुलाई 2019** को **GSLV Mk-III रॉकेट** से प्रक्षेपित किया गया था। यद्यपि विक्रम लैंडर की लैंडिंग असफल रही, लेकिन ऑर्बिटर अब भी वैज्ञानिक प्रयोग कर रहा है।

Key Themes for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC Notes:

- **Space Weather Interaction:** Solar CME effects on lunar exosphere.
- **Scientific Significance:** Understanding lunar atmospheric dynamics.
- **Technological Achievement:** Indigenous payload CHACE-2 onboard Chandrayaan-2.
- **Future Relevance:** Planning for sustainable lunar bases.
- **Make-in-India in Space Science:** Continued orbital success despite lander loss.

For a new path

With the surrender of key Maoist leaders, peace is now possible

That the Maoist insurgency is on the back foot has been evident for months now. The Maoist presence has been limited to 11 districts, with its core areas whittled down to three – the forested and remote districts of Bijapur, Narayanpur and Sukma in Chhattisgarh. The credit for weakening what was once termed India's "greatest internal security threat" must be shared by security forces that adapted counter-insurgency tactics to the realities on the ground, and district administrations and successive governments since the mid-2000s which accelerated developmental work. The defeat of the Maoists in hitherto impoverished tribal regions of central India followed a similar retreat from united Andhra Pradesh, which saw the same strategy. This made it near impossible for the insurgents to build alternative governance structures, eventually encircling cities – a plan followed by the Chinese Communist Party a century ago to defeat the Nationalists. The Maoists aimed to form base areas in remote districts of central and north-central India, in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, eastern Maharashtra, western Odisha and northern Andhra Pradesh. They expected support from tribals, many nursing disaffection due to the absence of the state and its developmental arms.

While areas such as Abujmahad in south Chhattisgarh, Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and parts of Odisha initially provided conditions for the Maoists to establish alternative institutions, over time, tribal unrest grew, with resentment over being used as pawns in militarist battles against the Indian state. This was partly because the Maoists privileged armed struggle over the economic uplift of tribals. The Maoists gained strength in the late 2000s when the Salwa Judum campaign resulted in massive displacement and brutal internecine battles, providing discontented recruits. However, the Supreme Court's ban on the campaign and the professionalisation of anti-insurgency forces weakened the militant insurgency. Simultaneously, tribal people saw more benefits from a proactive state – despite persisting limitations – leading to growing disillusionment with the Maoist idea of a violent route towards an alternative state. This experience mirrors what transpired in Peru, Colombia, the Philippines and Malaysia. That this realisation has dawned upon senior Maoist leaders is evident when surrendered Politburo member Mallojula Venugopal Rao suggested that the only task left was to "abandon the dogmatic practice of the Chinese and Russian lines, regardless of the change in circumstances and time [in India]". This opens the opportunity for the cadres to utilise spaces within Indian democracy for political engagement. Even if it has not convinced all the insurgents as yet, it will serve the people of the remaining districts and those committed to their uplift well if the Maoists abandon their struggle.

GS Paper Mapping:

- **UPSC GS Paper-3:** Internal Security – Linkages between Development & Extremism; Role of Security Forces in Internal Security.
 - **BPSC GS Paper-3 (Mains):** Internal Security & Naxalism in India.
 - **JPSC Paper-2:** Security Challenges & their Management in Border & Internal Areas.
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English Summary:

The article highlights that **Maoist insurgency in India has significantly weakened**, now restricted to **11 districts** with core areas in **Bijapur, Narayanpur, and Sukma (Chhattisgarh)**.

This decline is credited to:

- Effective **counter-insurgency operations** and **adaptation by security forces**.
- **Developmental work** accelerated since mid-2000s.
- **Professionalisation** of anti-insurgency forces and a **pro-people governance approach**.

Historically, Maoists aimed to replicate the **Chinese revolutionary model**, creating “base areas” in tribal regions of central and eastern India. However, the **Salwa Judum campaign**, followed by judicial and administrative interventions, **broke their support base**.

Tribal communities, once alienated, **began to see tangible benefits** from the State — roads, welfare, education, and employment — eroding Maoist influence.

Now, with key leaders like **Mallojula Venugopal Rao (Politburo member)** surrendering and acknowledging the futility of “dogmatic revolution,” a new opportunity for **peaceful democratic participation** has emerged.

The editorial argues that the **Indian democratic framework can absorb dissent** through dialogue, inclusion, and reform — unlike the violent path that led to socio-economic damage in other countries.

हिन्दी सारांश (Hindi Summary):

लेख में बताया गया है कि भारत में **माओवादी उग्रवाद अब काफी कमजोर पड़ चुका है**, और यह केवल **11 जिलों** तक सीमित रह गया है — मुख्य रूप से **बीजापुर, नारायणपुर और सुकमा (छत्तीसगढ़)** में।

इस सफलता का श्रेय जाता है:

- **सुरक्षा बलों की प्रभावी रणनीति** और **विकास-आधारित दृष्टिकोण** को।
- **जिला प्रशासन और सरकारों** द्वारा विकास कार्यों की गति बढ़ाने को।
- **अदालत के हस्तक्षेप और राज्य की सक्रिय नीतियों** को।

पहले माओवादी चीन की तर्ज़ पर “आधार क्षेत्र” बनाकर सशस्त्र शासन स्थापित करना चाहते थे, परंतु **सलवा जुडूम** जैसी घटनाओं और बाद में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट के प्रतिबंधों** ने उनके आंदोलन की दिशा बदल दी।

अब **जनजातीय समुदायों को राज्य से वास्तविक लाभ** मिलने लगे हैं, जिससे हिंसक विचारधारा का आकर्षण घटा है।

हाल ही में वरिष्ठ नेता **मल्लोजुला वेणुगोपाल राव** ने आत्मसमर्पण करते हुए कहा कि “चीनी और रूसी शैली के पुराने सिद्धांतों को छोड़ना होगा।”

लेख निष्कर्ष निकालता है कि **भारतीय लोकतंत्र असहमति को समाहित कर सकता है** — हिंसा के बजाय संवाद और विकास से ही स्थायी शांति संभव है।

Key Pointers for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC Notes:

1. **Status:** Maoist insurgency now restricted to 11 districts (mainly in Chhattisgarh).
2. **Reasons for Decline:** Developmental approach, effective counter-insurgency, tribal welfare.
3. **Judicial Role:** Supreme Court ban on Salwa Judum curtailed excesses.
4. **Social Shift:** Tribals realizing benefits of peaceful engagement.
5. **Policy Insight:** Need for inclusive governance, livelihood creation, and political dialogue.

The new arc of India-Australia collaboration

India's recent defence engagement with Australia reached a new milestone during Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Canberra and Sydney earlier this month for the inaugural Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue. The visit, the first by an Indian Defence Minister to Australia in over a decade, produced key defence agreements that upgrade the relationship from declaratory strategic convergence toward greater operational cooperation. The discussions included a Joint Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap to advance maritime cooperation, as well as renewing and strengthening the Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation.

Talks also covered an annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue, an Implementing Arrangement on Mutual Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation, progress on operationalising the Australia-India Implementing Arrangement on Air-to-Air Refuelling signed in 2024, expanded information-sharing, and the establishment of Joint Staff Talks as a forum to progress joint exercises, operations and interoperability across domains.

A deepening partnership

What makes these outcomes notable is their operational and industrial content. The submarine-rescue arrangement and Joint Staff Talks establish mechanisms for coordinated responses and contingency planning at sea; the air-to-air refuelling implementation and increased interoperability commitments improve tactical reach and combined air operations; and defence-industry round tables and offers by India's shipyards to support Australian fleet maintenance crystallise a logistics- and sustainment-oriented partnership rather than just high-level signalling. These are practical building blocks that enable more frequent, routinised cooperation across the Indian Ocean and western Pacific littorals.

The India-Australia defence relationship has been evolving in three phases that help explain why this visit mattered.

First, strategic convergence. India and Australia's shared concerns about China's unlawful assertions and the health of a rules-based Indo-Pacific have created recurrent diplomatic convergence through the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, United States) and



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Key defence agreements will result in a shared, stable and more routine model of cooperation

ministerial dialogues. Second, a deepening of operational ties. The last several years saw growing exercise participation, information-sharing and logistics conversations (including bilateral talks on air refuelling and exercises such as Talisman Sabre), which laid the groundwork for devising mechanisms during the current meeting.

Third, industrial and logistics convergence. Both capitals have started looking beyond bilateral exercises to maintenance, defence industry collaboration and securing supply chains, and turning occasional interoperability into longer-term sustenance. The trajectory of the bilateral defence partnership is, hence, evidently moving from warm words to a shared maritime operating model.

The critical reasons

The drivers behind this acceleration are both structural and pragmatic. Structurally, the changing balance of maritime power and Beijing's more coercive behaviour have incentivised middle powers to reduce operational gaps and create redundancy in defence linkages.

Practically, uncertainties about the reliability of any single external security provider have prompted India and Australia to strengthen their bilateral mechanisms, including logistics support, rescue cooperation and defence industrial ties, thereby reducing the operational friction costs associated with crisis cooperation. The developments concerning AUKUS (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.) and Australia's growing access to advanced platforms also created new demand for interoperability with regional partners, which is an opportunity that India can partially fill given its shipbuilding and repair capabilities.

India and Australia's defence partnership rests on a fusion of complementary strengths – India's scale and geography with Australia's technology and innovation. India's defence production reached a record ₹1.5 lakh crore in FY 2024-25, reflecting the success of its "Make in India" and Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiatives that have built a cost-effective, innovation-driven industrial ecosystem.

Its maritime geography, astride vital sea lanes in the Indian Ocean, and growing capabilities in domain awareness, logistics and submarine rescue give India significant regional reach.

Australia, meanwhile, complements this with advanced maritime and undersea technologies, including the P-8A Poseidon, MQ-4C Triton, and the "Ghost Shark" autonomous submarine. Supported by strong research and development Canberra brings technological depth and alliance-linked expertise. Together, India's industrial capacity and cost advantages align with Australia's high-end systems and innovation, creating a resilient, mutually reinforcing defence relationship. This synergy enhances the ability of both countries to sustain operations, co-develop technologies, and shape a stable Indo-Pacific maritime order.

Political economy and foreign policy signalling also matter. The relationship, initially elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2009 and further advanced to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020, rests on a foundation of shared democratic values, expanding economic linkages, and deepening people-to-people connections.

For Canberra, deepening ties with New Delhi diversifies security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. For New Delhi, Australia is a like-minded partner that can expand India's reach in the southern Indo-Pacific while bolstering maritime domain awareness and industrial cooperation. At the bureaucratic level, creating annual ministerial and joint staff mechanisms institutionalises the relationship so that cooperation survives political cycles and episodic strategic disruptions.

Looking ahead

The discussions during Mr. Singh's visit are significant but calibrated while being incremental, reversible and oriented toward interoperability and crisis management rather than binding security guarantees. The following steps to watch would be the pace of implementing logistics and ship-repair arrangements, the depth of classified information-sharing frameworks, concrete defence-industrial joint projects, and how Canberra and New Delhi align these practical ties with broader Quad activity.

If implemented steadily, the arrangements signed during the visit will make India-Australia defence cooperation more routinised, operationally meaningful, and strategically consequential for Indo-Pacific maritime stability.

GS Paper Mapping:

- **UPSC GS Paper-2:** India and its Neighbourhood Relations; Bilateral, Regional, and Global Groupings; Effect of Policies of Developed Countries on India's Interests.
- **GS Paper-3:** Defence Technology & Internal Security Cooperation.
- **BPSC GS Paper-2 / JPSC GS Paper-2:** India's International Relations; Strategic Partnerships & Foreign Policy.

English Summary:

India's recent high-level defence engagement with **Australia** marks a strategic deepening of cooperation beyond declaratory statements. The **Defence Ministers' Dialogue** between Rajnath Singh and his Australian counterpart in Canberra and Sydney signalled the institutionalisation of a comprehensive partnership.

Key outcomes include:

- Adoption of a **Joint Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap** for naval cooperation.
- Renewal of the **Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation**.
- Progress on **Mutual Submarine Rescue Support, Air-to-Air Refuelling, and Joint Staff Talks**.

These mechanisms enhance **interoperability, logistics sharing, and coordinated responses** in the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific — critical for maintaining freedom of navigation and balancing China's assertiveness.

The editorial argues that India-Australia relations are shifting from "strategic rhetoric" to **operational**

synergy through joint exercises (e.g., **Talisman Sabre**), industrial linkages, and supply-chain resilience in defence production.

Australia brings advanced maritime assets like **P-8A Poseidon**, **MQ-4C Triton** drones, and underwater technologies; India contributes strategic geography, blue-water navy capabilities, and skilled manpower. Together, they form an essential pillar of the **Indo-Pacific security architecture**, complementing Quad initiatives.

The partnership also integrates economic and industrial cooperation via **Innovation for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** and **Make in India**, reinforcing self-reliance in defence manufacturing and logistics.

Strategic Significance:

- Counters China's maritime expansion and coercive diplomacy.
- Strengthens India's presence in the **Southern Indo-Pacific arc**.
- Promotes a rules-based maritime order and **shared democratic values**.
- Expands defence trade, technology transfer, and operational training.

हिन्दी सारांश (Hindi Summary):

भारत और ऑस्ट्रेलिया के बीच हालिया **रक्षा सहयोग** ने संबंधों को एक नए रणनीतिक स्तर पर पहुँचा दिया है।

रक्षा मंत्री **राजनाथ सिंह** की ऑस्ट्रेलिया यात्रा के दौरान दोनों देशों ने **Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap** तथा **Joint Declaration on Defence Cooperation** पर सहमति व्यक्त की।

मुख्य उपलब्धियाँ:

- **संयुक्त नौसैनिक संचालन और लॉजिस्टिक शेयरिंग** के लिए रूपरेखा।
- **Submarine Rescue Support** और **Air-to-Air Refuelling** पर व्यावहारिक प्रगति।
- **Joint Staff Talks** का नियमितीकरण, जिससे अंतर-संचालन क्षमता में वृद्धि।

इन पहलों से हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में **सुरक्षा और स्थिरता** को मजबूती मिलेगी तथा चीन की आक्रामक गतिविधियों का संतुलन बनेगा।

ऑस्ट्रेलिया की तकनीकी क्षमता (P-8A Poseidon, Triton Drones आदि) और भारत की रणनीतिक स्थिति तथा नौसैनिक दक्षता मिलकर क्षेत्रीय सामरिक संतुलन को सुदृढ़ करती हैं।

यह संबंध केवल रक्षा तक सीमित नहीं बल्कि **औद्योगिक और वैज्ञानिक सहयोग** के माध्यम से आत्मनिर्भर भारत की दिशा में भी कदम है।

दोनों देश **Make in India** और **iDEX** जैसे कार्यक्रमों के तहत रक्षा उत्पादन, नवाचार और उद्योग-से-उद्योग साझेदारी को बढ़ावा देंगे।

रणनीतिक महत्व:

- हिंद-प्रशांत में चीन की आक्रामकता का प्रतिकार।
- नौसैनिक क्षेत्र में भारत की भूमिका को सुदृढ़ करना।
- साझा लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों और नियम-आधारित व्यवस्था को बढ़ावा देना।
- रक्षा उत्पादन और तकनीकी हस्तांतरण में सहयोग बढ़ाना।

Key Points for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC Notes:

1. **Frameworks:** Joint Maritime Security Roadmap; Mutual Submarine Rescue Support.
2. **Strategic Context:** Indo-Pacific alignment; counter-balancing China; Quad synergy.
3. **Industrial Integration:** Logistics sharing, iDEX cooperation, Make in India defence production.
4. **Diplomatic Layer:** From symbolic partnership to **operational defence alliance**.
5. **Way Forward:**
 - Expand interoperability and joint training.
 - Institutionalise defence-industrial supply chains.
 - Enhance maritime domain awareness and cyber-security coordination.

The far-right's infiltration into the West's mainstream

For years, western capitals invoked the Enlightenment – liberty, equality, reason – as their moral compass. Across the trans-Atlantic world today, ideas long parked on the fringes, nativism, ethno-nationalism, and headline “law and order”, increasingly shape prime-time debate. This is not a sudden rupture but a gradual normalisation, election by election and motion by motion, testing whether democracies that preached tolerance abroad can still defend it at home.

Normalising once-fringe hardline agendas

Italy has a far-right Prime Minister in Giorgia Meloni, the first since the Second World War. In France, Marine Le Pen's National Rally has shed its outcast tag, taking 41% in the 2022 runoff and often leading opinion polls. Germany's Alternative for Germany (AfD), long kept at arm's length, has topped national surveys, won its first district office, and even the present ruling party of Germany had relied on AfD votes to pass hard-line migration motions, breaching a post-war taboo. In the Nordics, the Sweden Democrats and Finland's Finns Party are no longer gatecrashers but kingmakers, trading support for tougher immigration rules. Mainstream political trends in Hungary and Poland have normalised a nationalist turn. On the Iberian rim, Spain's Vox and Portugal's Chega are gaining ground. What began as protest is edging into power, recasting the centre, not with a single sweep, but through steady local wins and tactical coalitions that shift policy first and politics after. Even where they do not hold power outright, they are dragging the political centre rightward. Traditional conservative parties, desperate to stem the loss of voters, increasingly echo hard-right positions on issues such as immigration, multiculturalism and “law and order”. The “Unite the Kingdom” march in London in September, organised by far-right activist Tommy Robinson, drew around 1,10,000 people, one of the largest right-wing demonstrations in recent memory. Mr. Robinson and allied commentators argue that there is a “two-tier policing” regime that treats right-wing protesters more harshly than others, casting their mobilisation as a free-speech defence and



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The question is whether the trans-Atlantic world can challenge this ascent and live up to its professed values

themselves as victims of an establishment double standard.

In the United States, the rightward drift is no longer atmospheric; it is administrative now. Since January 20, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump has moved on multiple fronts: an order to constrict birthright citizenship, now tied up in litigation; the resurrection of “Schedule F,” reopening the door to sweeping political control over policy posts; a Justice Department push asking the Supreme Court to lock passports to sex assigned at birth; and a headline-grabbing move to slap a \$1,00,000 charge on new H-1B visa petitions. Each step signals a project to hard-wire ideology into rules and paperwork. Meanwhile, ideas once confined to the fringe, the ‘replacement’ conspiracy and talk of an immigrant ‘invasion’, now echo in prime time and from elected officials, blurring the boundary between protest and policy. Together, policy levers and grievance politics are pulling the Republican party's centre of gravity further right, and dragging the national conversation with it.

A democratic counter-strategy should be sober, not alarmist. Four priorities which need to stand out. First, the need to address material grievances on inflation, public safety, service strain - without scapegoating migrants or minorities. Welfare-chauvinism is politically seductive but fiscally thin for the long term.

Second, maintain the firewall with no Faustian pacts. Short-term parliamentary wins that rely on extremist votes erode long-term democratic norms.

Third, responsibility in media and tech platforms which needs to amplify verified information, throttle demonstrable falsehoods, and insist on context when airing incendiary claims such as “two-tier policing”.

Fourth, civic courage for ordinary citizens, institutions, and mainstream parties who must defend equal citizenship and pluralism, principles that have served open societies well.

The stakes for India

For India, the stakes are concrete now. The U.K.'s grievance-driven street politics intersects with diaspora safety and social cohesion. Continental Europe's hardening on migration and identity

can shape visa regimes for students and skilled workers, as well as attitudes toward multiculturalism. The U.S. H-1B surcharge – if it remains in force after litigation and potential congressional scrutiny – directly raises costs for Indian professionals and firms, potentially diverting investment and talent flows. India also has a diplomatic interest in the quality of liberal democracy among key partners. When mainstream actors chase fringe talking points to protect vote banks, they shift the Overton window on pluralism, media independence and human rights – the very norms that underpin predictable partnerships, research ties and people-to-people links. That has knock-on effects for Indian students, businesses and long-standing communities abroad.

History and a caution

To be sure, the far-right's ascent has not gone unchallenged. Citizens, activists and leaders continue to push back – in Germany, Spain and elsewhere, crowds have gathered to say that hate is not welcome, while courts and journalists have exposed abuses that thrive in the shadows. In several western countries, broad alliances have been forged to keep extremists from power, as France's mainstream did against Marine Le Pen. The ideals are not dead yet, but they do need stewards. The question is whether the trans-Atlantic world will live up to its professed values or allow fear to erode gains won over generations. History's caution is plain – Europe's 1930s showed how a modern society can abandon liberal norms under the spell of demagoguery. The post-war order was built precisely to avoid that slide. Meeting this moment will require sober self-correction: listening to real economic and cultural anxieties without turning them into vendettas; resisting the temptation to launder fringe ideas through expedient coalitions; insisting on accuracy in public debate; and renewing everyday solidarities across lines of difference. Democracies are strongest when they protect the equal dignity of all. Equality, pluralism and reason remain the surest compass if we choose to follow it.

The views expressed are personal

GS Paper Mapping:

- **UPSC GS Paper-2:** International Relations; Effect of Policies of Developed Nations on India's Interests.
- **UPSC GS Paper-1:** Society — Globalization, Communalism, Secularism.
- **BPSC / JPSC GS Paper-2:** Global Politics and Governance; Impact of Western Policies on Developing Nations.

English Summary:

The editorial discusses how **far-right ideologies**, once confined to the fringes of Western politics, have now **entered mainstream governance** across Europe and the United States.

Key Context:

- In **Italy**, Giorgia Meloni's far-right government has normalized hardline nationalism.
- In **France**, Marine Le Pen's National Rally is now a major political force.
- **Germany's AfD (Alternative for Germany)** has gained record support even in mainstream areas.
- Similar trends appear in **Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Sweden, and the U.S.**, reflecting the erosion of liberal democratic norms.

These parties champion **nativism, anti-immigration policies, “law and order,” and ethnonationalism**, rejecting multiculturalism and liberal values once rooted in Enlightenment thought.

In the United States, this shift is visible in policy measures like restrictions on immigration (H-1B visa rules), judicial activism aligning with conservative politics, and polarisation in civil discourse.

The author argues that what was once “fringe extremism” has been normalised via **gradual acceptance** — through elections, coalition politics, and public fear narratives. Conservative parties, in a bid to retain relevance, have **absorbed far-right rhetoric**, moving the political centre toward nationalism and exclusion.

Broader Implications:

- Rise of authoritarian populism weakens democratic pluralism.
- The “Overton Window” of public debate (what is considered acceptable) has shifted toward intolerance.
- Liberal democracies face an identity crisis: between preserving open societies and responding to economic and cultural anxieties.
- For India, this ideological shift in the West affects **migration policies (H-1B), academic ties, and diaspora interests**, as multiculturalism weakens.

The author calls for:

1. Responsible media and fact-based politics.
2. Courage among citizens to defend equal citizenship and pluralism.
3. Revitalizing international democratic solidarity.
4. Renewed faith in Enlightenment principles — liberty, equality, and reason — as a moral compass for governance.

हिन्दी सारांश (Hindi Summary):

यह लेख पश्चिमी देशों में **दक्षिणपंथी विचारधारा (Far-Right Ideology)** के मुख्यधारा में प्रवेश पर केंद्रित है। अब पहले से अलग-थलग रहे **राष्ट्रवादी, प्रवासी-विरोधी और कानून व्यवस्था आधारित विचार** यूरोप और अमेरिका के शासन का हिस्सा बन चुके हैं।

मुख्य बिंदु:

- **इटली** में जॉर्जिया मेलोनी की सरकार “राष्ट्रवादी पहचान” को सामान्य बना रही है।
- **फ्रांस** में मरीन ले पेन की पार्टी मुख्यधारा में है।
- **जर्मनी** में AfD की लोकप्रियता बढ़ी है, और मुख्यधारा पार्टियाँ अब उन्हीं मुद्दों पर प्रतिस्पर्धा कर रही हैं।
- **स्वीडन, हंगरी, स्पेन, पुर्तगाल और अमेरिका** में भी समान प्रवृत्तियाँ दिख रही हैं।

इस बदलाव के प्रभाव:

- लोकतांत्रिक समाजों में **बहुलवाद और सहिष्णुता कमजोर** हो रही है।
- पारंपरिक दल अपने वोट बचाने के लिए कठोर राष्ट्रवाद और प्रवासी-विरोध को अपनाने लगे हैं।
- इससे राजनीतिक विमर्श का केंद्र दाईं ओर खिसक गया है।
- अमेरिका में H-1B वीजा प्रतिबंध, न्यायिक रूढ़िवादिता और प्रवासी-विरोधी कानून इस प्रवृत्ति का संकेत हैं।

लेखक का मत:

- लोकतंत्र के लिए सबसे बड़ा खतरा “धीरे-धीरे सामान्य हो चुका उग्र राष्ट्रवाद” है।
- मीडिया, नागरिकों और राजनीतिक दलों को तथ्यों, समानता और विवेकशील संवाद पर टिके रहना चाहिए।
- **स्वतंत्रता, समानता और तर्कशीलता** जैसे प्रबोधन-युग के आदर्श ही लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों को बचा सकते हैं।

UPSC/BPSC/JPSC Notes – Key Takeaways:

1. **Theme:** Rise of far-right populism and decline of liberal democratic ideals in the West.
2. **Concepts:** Overton Window, ethnonationalism, anti-immigration politics.
3. **Global Impact:**
 - Weakening of global democratic coalitions.
 - Shrinking multicultural spaces affecting India’s diaspora and students.
 - Harder immigration laws (H-1B, asylum restrictions).
4. **India’s Concern:** Reduced Western openness to skilled migration, research ties, and liberal engagement.
5. **Way Forward:**
 - Strengthen domestic pluralism.
 - Promote inclusive diplomacy.
 - Support fact-based international coalitions upholding democratic norms.

Deendayal Port may build popular ship models

Avinash Nair

For nearly a year, Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) — the operator of the historic Kandla port on India's western coast — has been pursuing an ambitious plan to convert more than 2,000 acres of coastal land into a world-class shipbuilding cluster.

Originally aimed at building very large crude carriers (VLCCs), the project hit a wall after lacklustre response from industry forced DPA to scrap its tender. Now, the port is shifting focus to market-aligned vessel sizes — panamax (65,000-80,000 dead weight tonne) and handymax (40,000-60,000 DWT).

"The project will be developed by DPA through the selection of a technology



New plan: The port is working on a revised model — with more flexible terms and government sops to rekindle interest. REUTERS

partner. For this, we are in the process of engaging a consultant who will study and suggest the terms and conditions for engagement with the partner. The inputs from the consultant and shipbuilders will also be used to restructure the tender," S.K. Singh, Chairman, DPA, told

businessline.

Offer incentives

Apart from the incentives that will flow to its future partner from the Centre, the DPA is keen to assist with its own incentives, including land with waterfront, environmental clearance, and investing a

portion of the equity needed for the project. "We are no longer targeting to build VLCCs (ships with up to 3,20,000 DWT), as we discovered through the earlier tender that there were few takers for it. So we are targeting to explore the market for panamax or handymax vessels.

Maritime ambition

A tender floated to attract developers last December drew just one bid — not enough to move forward under government procurement norms.

With the tender shelved, the DPA is reportedly revisiting its strategy. A revised model — with more flexible terms, government incentives, or phased development — is in the works to rekindle interest.

Four-pronged strategy

This revised strategy will include the new incentives proclaimed by the Indian government in September 2025, laying out a ₹69,725-crore comprehensive strategy to transform the country into a global hub for shipbuilding and ship repair. The first of this four-pillar approach is a Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme (SBFAS) with a corpus of ₹24,736 crore, along with a ₹4,001-crore shipbreaking credit note and tax exemptions for shipbuilding inputs.

Secondly, a ₹25,000-crore Maritime Development Fund (MDF) has been established to ensure long-term, affordable financing for shipbuilding and repair activities.

Thirdly, under the Ship-

building Development Scheme (SbDS), ₹19,989 crore has been allocated to enhance India's shipbuilding capacity to 4.5 million gross tonnage annually, through new and upgraded shipyards, development of shipyard clusters, and the establishment of the India Ship Technology Centre for design, training, and R&D.

The fourth pillar focuses on institutional, legal, policy, and tax reforms, along with skill development, enhancement of technical capability, and green practices in shipbuilding and shipbreaking. A National Shipbuilding Mission will oversee implementation.

The revised tender is expected to take about three months.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

GS Paper Mapping:

- **UPSC GS Paper-3:** Infrastructure – Ports, Shipping & Shipbuilding Industry; Government Policies & Schemes for Industrial Development.
- **BPSC Paper-5 / JPSC Paper-2:** Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Industrial Policy.

English Summary:

The **Deendayal Port Authority (DPA)** — operator of the historic **Kandla Port** on India's western coast — is planning to transform **over 2,000 acres of coastal land** into a **world-class shipbuilding cluster**.

Originally, the plan targeted **Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs)**, but due to poor private sector response, the focus has now shifted to **Panamax (65,000–80,000 DWT)** and **Handymax (40,000–60,000 DWT)** ship models, which have higher global market demand.

The DPA will collaborate with a **technology and energy partner** and appoint consultants to finalize business terms. The revised model includes **flexible tender norms, environmental clearance, and government incentives** to attract industry participation.

Government Schemes and Strategic Framework:

□ Four-Pronged National Strategy (Announced in Sept 2025):

1. **Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme (SBFAS):**
 - Corpus: ₹24,736 crore.
 - Includes ₹4,001 crore for shipbreaking credit and tax exemptions for shipbuilding inputs.
2. **Maritime Development Fund (MDF):**
 - ₹25,000 crore fund for low-interest, long-term loans for shipbuilding and repair.
3. **Shipbuilding Development Scheme (SbDS):**
 - ₹19,989 crore allocated to expand India's shipbuilding capacity to **4.5 million gross tonnage annually**.
 - Supports modernization of shipyards, ship clusters, and the **India Ship Technology Centre** for R&D and training.
4. **Institutional and Policy Reforms:**
 - Focus on legal, policy, and tax reforms.
 - Skill development, green shipbuilding practices, and enhanced technical capacity.
 - Implementation under the **National Shipbuilding Mission (NSM)**.

Strategic Importance:

- Boosts **Make in India** and **Maritime India Vision 2030** goals.
 - Reduces dependence on foreign-built vessels and enhances **blue economy potential**.
 - Creates **employment opportunities** and supports ancillary sectors like steel, electronics, and marine engineering.
 - Positions India as a **global shipbuilding hub**, aligning with Sagarmala and PM Gati Shakti initiatives.
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हिन्दी सारांश (Hindi Summary):

दीनदयाल पोर्ट प्राधिकरण (DPA), जो ऐतिहासिक **कांडला बंदरगाह** का संचालन करता है, अब **2,000 एकड़ तटीय भूमि** को एक **विश्वस्तरीय शिपबिल्डिंग क्लस्टर** में बदलने की महत्वाकांक्षी योजना पर कार्य कर रहा है। पहले यह योजना **बहुत बड़े कूड कैरियर्स (VLCCs)** के निर्माण हेतु थी, परंतु निवेशकों की कम रुचि के कारण अब इसे **पैनामैक्स (65,000-80,000 DWT)** और **हैंडीमैक्स (40,000-60,000 DWT)** जहाजों पर केंद्रित किया गया है। DPA अब **लचीले टेंडर प्रावधानों, सरकारी प्रोत्साहनों, और पर्यावरणीय अनुमतियों** के साथ नए मॉडल पर कार्य कर रहा है, ताकि निजी निवेश को आकर्षित किया जा सके।

सरकार की चार-स्तरीय रणनीति (सितंबर 2025):

1. **शिपबिल्डिंग फाइनेंशियल असिस्टेंस स्कीम (SBFAS):**
 - ₹24,736 करोड़ का कोष।
 - ₹4,001 करोड़ शिपब्रेकिंग क्रेडिट और कर छूट हेतु।
 2. **मैरीटाइम डेवलपमेंट फंड (MDF):**
 - ₹25,000 करोड़ का कोष - कम ब्याज दर पर लंबी अवधि के ऋणों हेतु।
 3. **शिपबिल्डिंग डेवलपमेंट स्कीम (SbDS):**
 - ₹19,989 करोड़ आवंटित, जिससे भारत की क्षमता **4.5 मिलियन ग्राँस टनेज प्रतिवर्ष** तक बढ़ेगी।
 - नए और उन्नत शिपयार्ड्स तथा **इंडिया शिप टेक्नोलॉजी सेंटर** की स्थापना शामिल।
 4. **संस्थागत एवं नीतिगत सुधार:**
 - कानूनी, कर एवं नीति सुधार।
 - कौशल विकास, हरित शिपबिल्डिंग और तकनीकी क्षमता बढ़ाना।
 - **राष्ट्रीय शिपबिल्डिंग मिशन (NSM)** द्वारा क्रियान्वयन।
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Key Takeaways for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC Notes:

Theme	Details
Sector	Port-led Shipbuilding & Maritime Infrastructure
Policy Linkages	Sagarmala, Gati Shakti, Blue Economy Vision
Schemes Mentioned	SBFAS, MDF, SbDS, National Shipbuilding Mission
Objective	Transform India into a global shipbuilding hub
Exam Relevance	Infrastructure, Industrial Policy, Maritime Economy