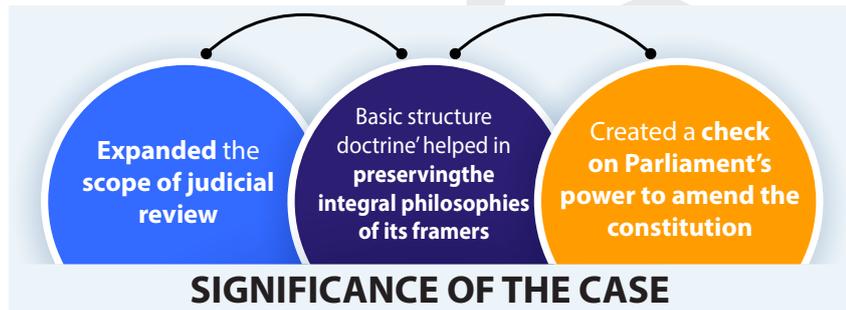


NEWS TODAY

50 YEARS OF KESAVANANDA BHARATI SRIPADAGALVARU AND OTHERS V STATE OF KERALA CASE

● **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973) involved several key legal issues, including:**

- **Constitutional Validity of Kerala Land Reforms Act:** which placed a limit on amount of land that a person could hold.
- **Whether Parliament's power to amend Constitution was unlimited.**
- **Doctrine of basic structure of Constitution.**



● SC, in its judgment, **established doctrine of basic structure**, which holds that **certain fundamental features** of Constitution **cannot be amended or abrogated by Parliament** through a constitutional amendment.

- Features included **supremacy of Constitution, rule of law, independence of judiciary** etc.

● **Since then, SC has tested constitutional amendments** against doctrine of basic structure **in several cases including:**

- **Quota for OBC and Economically Weaker Section (EWS)**, reservations in promotions, **where SC upheld constitutional amendments challenged** on grounds of violation of basic structure doctrine.
- **SC struck down The Constitution (Ninety-ninth Amendment) Act, 2014**, which established National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC).
- **Other important cases include:** Kihoto Hollohan vs Zachillhu And Others (1992) (Tenth Schedule), Minerva Mills Case (1980), L Chandra Kumar v Union of India (1997) (regarding administrative tribunals) etc.

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI PLANS NETWORK OF GROUNDWATER SENSORS TO MONITOR QUALITY, CONTAMINATION LEVELS

● Plan is **to continuously relay information on groundwater levels** as well as the degree of contamination **down to the taluk level.**

- **Central Groundwater Board reports currently** relies on a **network of about 26 thousand groundwater observation wells** to manually measure state of groundwater in a region.

● **Establishing such a network will:**

- **Make groundwater visible** much the same way as **air quality, meteorological variables.**
- **Provide groundwater forecasts to farmers** that would be useful for sowing.
- **Provide updated advisories** that can **influence groundwater extraction policies by States.**

● As per World Bank, **India is the largest groundwater user.** Groundwater meets **nearly 80% of the country's drinking water and two-thirds of its irrigation needs.**

● **Steps taken for groundwater governance in India**

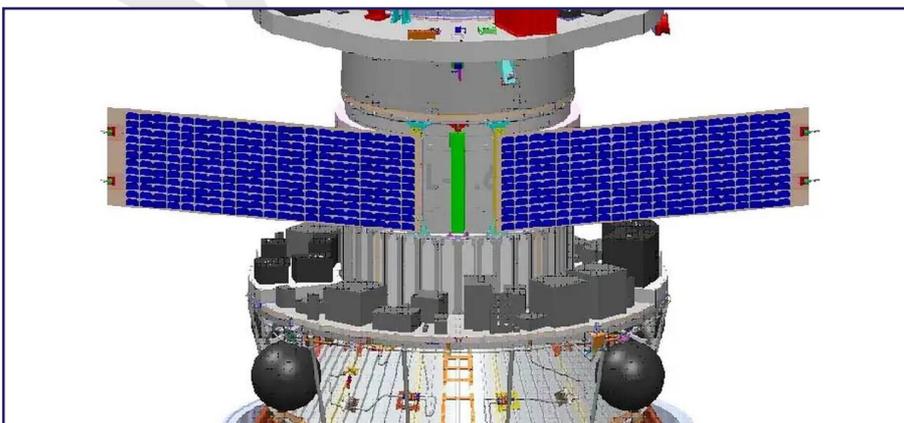
- **Creation of Ministry of Jal Shakti** (a merger of erstwhile department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation along with Drinking Water and Sanitation).
- **Initiatives like Atal Bhujal Yojana and National Project on Aquifer Management** for effective management and regulation.
- **A heli-borne based survey** for rapid and accurate aquifer mapping.
- **India-Groundwater Resource Estimation System (IN-GRES)** software.
- **Mobile application – Jaldoot-** to monitor underground water levels across the country.

BENGALURU HOSTS CONFERENCE TO HELP CITIES MAINSTREAM CLIMATE ACTION

- It was **organized by C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group**, together with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), and was **part of series of events organised under the ambit of the Urban 20 (U20)**.
 - C40 is a **network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities** to deliver urgent action needed to **confront climate crisis**.
 - **U20 is a city diplomacy initiative**, convened by C40 Cities and United Cities and Local Governments, that **brings together cities from G20 member states to discuss global economic, climate and development issues**.
- **Reducing energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in cities is fundamental** to any **comprehensive effort to achieve climate goals**.
 - **Half of the world's population lives in cities**, accounting for **three-quarters of global energy use and GHG emissions**.
- **Emerging strategies to rebalance cities' relationship with nature:**
 - **India's Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) initiative:** For making lifestyle choices to improve planet and urges mindful utilisation instead of mindless and destructive consumption.
 - **Circular economy:** that replace 'end-of-life' concept with reducing, alternatively reusing, recycling and recovering materials.
 - **Urban Forestry, Nature based Solutions (NbS)**, Nature based infrastructure/green infrastructure etc.

ISRO CARRIES OUT SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT USING POEM-2 IN PSLV-C55 MISSION

- PSLV-C55 is a **dedicated mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, for the international satellite customer from Singapore.
 - **PSLV is a four-stage launch vehicle** (1st & 3rd stage: Solid; 2nd & 4th: Liquid).
 - **NSIL is the commercial arm of ISRO for enabling Indian industries** to take up **high technology space-related activities**.
- **Main payloads launched:**
 - **TeLEOS-2, an earth observation satellite** to support satellite imaging requirements of Singapore government agencies.
 - **Lumelite-4 to augment Singapore's maritime navigation** and benefit the global shipping community.
- **Mission, for the first time, saw solar panels powering PSLV's fourth (final) stage** for conducting month-long experiments.
 - **Usually, fourth and final stage of a rocket** remains in space for only a couple of days before **dropping back into the atmosphere and burning up**.
- **PSLV includes PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-2 (POEM-2) platform to perform in-orbit experiments** using the **final stage of PSLV**.
 - POEM has a **dedicated Navigation Guidance and Control** system which **acts as platform's brain** to stabilize it with specified accuracy.
 - POEM will derive its **power from mounted solar panels and a Li-Ion battery**.



THREE DECADES OF 73RD CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT COMING INTO FORCE

- 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were passed by Parliament in December, 1992. Acts came into force on April 24, 1993 and June 1, 1993 respectively.
 - It is for this reason that **April 24 is observed as National Panchayati Raj Day** in India.
- **73rd Amendment added Part IX** titled "The Panchayats" and **74th Amendment added Part IXA** titled "The Municipalities".
- **Major achievements of 73rd Amendment act**
 - **Proportion of elected women representatives** has been **steadily rising**. Also several states like **Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Kerala** have **more than 50% women representatives** in local bodies.
 - **Women's representation** in local bodies **positively impacted delivery of local public goods** to marginalised communities.
 - **Many elected members** particularly **women, SCs, and STs** are **beginning to assert their constitutional rights** and slowly emerge as leaders.
 - **Created healthy competition among various states** regarding devolution (3Fs: funds, functions, and functionaries).
- **Challenges faced**
 - **Lack of devolution of 3Fs** to local bodies.
 - **Lack of power to make policy** and only **function as instruments of state government directives**.
 - **Dependent on state governments for grants** accompanied by **low levels of fiscal devolution**.
 - **Other:** low level of awareness, prevalence of caste, class and gender hierarchies.



MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (MoPNG) COMPLETED BIHAR PORTION OF BARAUNI GUWAHATI PIPELINE

- Barauni-Guwahati pipeline **will connect Bihar to National Gas Grid** under Pradhanmantri Urja Ganga Project.
- National Gas Grid has been **envisaged to ensure adequate availability and equitable distribution** of natural gas in all parts of the country.
 - At present, there are **about 22000 km long Natural Gas pipeline network** which is **operational in the country**.
 - **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)** is the authority to **grant authorization** for laying pipelines.
- **Its objectives are:**
 - **Remove regional imbalance** with regard to access of natural gas.
 - **Connect gas sources to major demand centres** and ensure availability of gas to consumers.
 - **Develop City Gas Distribution Networks** in various cities for supply of CNG and PNG.
- **Key projects under National Gas Grid**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project** to connect Eastern India. **It incorporates**
 - **Jagdishpur- Haldia –Bokaro- Dhamra Pipeline.**
 - **Barauni - Guwahati pipeline**
 - **North East Gas Grid** to connect eight states of North Eastern India.
 - **City Gas Distribution Networks** in various cities for supply of CNG and PNG.

ALSO IN NEWS



International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

- IFAD **will set up a new framework to facilitate cooperation** between **small agricultural producers** in developing nations and **businesses in Japan** and elsewhere.
- IFAD is an **international financial institution** and **specialized United Nations (UN) agency** based in Rome.
 - It was one of the **major outcomes of 1974 World Food Conference**.
 - IFAD has **177 Member States including India**.
- IFAD **invest in rural people**, empowering them to **increase their food security, improve the nutrition** of their families **and increase their incomes**.



Ponzi scheme

- Union Finance Minister stated that **Centre will clamp down on Ponzi apps**.
- It is a **fraudulent investing scam promising high rates of return** with little risk to investors.
- It **relies on a constant flow of new investments** to continue to **provide returns to older investors**.
 - This is **similar to a pyramid scheme** in that both are based on **using new investor's funds to pay the earlier backers**.
- **Government passed the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019**, to put in place a mechanism to **secure poor depositors/investors** from Ponzi schemes.



Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary

- Madhya Pradesh CM said that **Gandhisagar Sanctuary will be developed as a second home for cheetahs**.
- **About Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary**
 - Situated in **northwestern Madhya Pradesh**, with one of its boundaries running along the **border of Rajasthan**.
 - **River Chambal** flows through the sanctuary.
 - It is also a designated **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area**.
 - **Flora:** Khair, Salai, Kardhai, Dhawda, Tendu, Palash etc.
 - **Fauna:** Chinkara, Spotted Deer, Indian Leopard, Striped Hyena etc.



Pushkaralu/Pushkaram Festival

- **12-day Pushkaralu festival of Telugu-speaking people** commenced in Varanasi.
- Pushkaralu refers to the **worship of the 12 sacred rivers in which the god Pushkar appears every 12 years**.
 - **Rivers are:** Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Bhima, Tapti, Narmada, Saraswati, Tungbhadra, Sindhu, and Pranhita.
- The celebration happens **annually, once in 12 years along each river which are associated with a zodiac sign**.



Calcium Carbide

- FSSAI has urged **states and UTs** to act against **unauthorised use of artificial fruit ripening agents like Calcium carbide**.
- Calcium carbide is **commonly used in mining and metal industries** as well as in **production of acetylene gas**.
 - It is a **highly reactive compound and releases acetylene gas** which is used to artificially ripen fruits.
 - It is a **highly toxic substance that can cause a range of health problems**, including **skin irritation, respiratory problems and even cancer**.
- **Use of calcium carbide is prohibited** as per the provision of **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulation, 2011**.



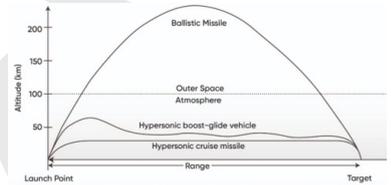
Darwin's theory of evolution

- Science community **criticised NCERT's move to delete Darwin's theory of evolution**.
 - Theory of evolution is a **shortened form of theory of evolution by natural selection**.
 - It was **proposed by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace** in the nineteenth century.
- Charles Darwin in his book '**On the Origin of Species**' proposed that **evolution occurs because of 'natural selection'**.
- Organisms **produce more offspring than are able to survive** in their environment. Those that are **better physically equipped to survive, grow to maturity, and reproduce** (survival of the fittest).
- Those **most suited to their environment** are the **most likely pass on their traits to the next generation**.



Ballistic missiles

- **DRDO successfully conducted** a flight trial of a **sea-based endo-atmospheric interceptor missile**, used to **engage a hostile ballistic missile threat**.
- **Ballistic missiles** have a **ballistic trajectory** over most of its flight path, regardless of whether it is a weapon-delivery vehicle.
 - **Powered by rockets initially** but then they follow an unpowered, **free-falling trajectory toward their targets**.
Example: **Prithvi, Agni etc.**
- **On the other hand, A cruise missile is self-propelled** (till the time of impact) guided vehicle that sustains flight through aerodynamic lift **for most of its flight path**.
 - They **fly within the earth's atmosphere**. Ex: **Brahmos**.



LockBit ransomware

- **LockBit ransomware was found to be targeting Mac devices**, making this first major ransomware operation to specifically target Apple computers.
 - Ransomware is a **category of malware that gains access to systems and makes them unusable to its users**.
- LockBit ransomware is **designed to infiltrate victims' systems and encrypt important files**.
 - It was **dubbed the "abcd" virus**, due to file extension used when encrypting victim's files.
 - It is **categorised as a "crypto virus"** due to its requests for payment in cryptocurrency to decrypt files.
 - It **operates on ransomware-as-a-service (Raas) model**.



Khelo India Scheme (KIS)

- KIS recently **completed 5 years**.
- KIS has been introduced (tenure till 2025-26) to **revive sports culture in India at the grass-root level**.
- It is the flagship **Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**.
- **Scheme has following components**: Creation and Upgradation of Sports Infrastructure, Sports Competitions and Talent Development, Khelo India Centres and Sports Academies, Fit India Movement and Promotion of Inclusiveness through Sports.

Personality in News

Jagadguru Basaveshwara

- **PM paid tributes** to Basaveshwara **on his birth anniversary**.
- He was a **12th century poet and was born in Karnataka**.
- Known for **Socio-Religious Reforms, Anubhava Mantapa** (facilitated gathering for philosophy and experience), **Vachana Literature and Lingayat Movement** in south India.
 - **Basava Purana**, written by Palkuriki Somanatha in 13th-century, holds full account to Basavanna's life and ideas.
- He **rejected gender and caste discrimination, superstitions and rituals**.
- A strong **promoter of ahimsa (non-violence)**, he condemned human and animal sacrifices.
- His philosophy was based on principles of **Arivu (true knowledge), achara (right conduct), and Anubhava (divine experience)**.
- He developed and inspired a new devotional movement named **Virashaivas, or ardent, heroic worshippers of Shiva**.
- **Ethical Values**: Compassionate, Egalitarian, selflessness etc.