

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

Friday, 25 Oct , 2024

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The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been utilising its satellites, EOS-06 and INSAT-3DR, to monitor Cyclone Dana as it approaches Odisha and West Bengal.

- ➔ The data from these satellites is crucial for tracking the cyclone's development and aiding in disaster management efforts to mitigate its impact on coastal regions.

EOS-06:

- ➔ **Launch Date:** November 26, 2022
- ➔ **Type:** Earth Observation Satellite (EOS) developed by ISRO
- ➔ **Purpose:** Designed to monitor weather patterns, including cyclones, rainfall, and ocean winds
- ➔ **Key Features:** Equipped with a Scatterometer sensor for assessing wind speed and direction over oceans
- ➔ **Significance:** Enhances disaster management and environmental monitoring capabilities in India
- ➔ **Orbit:** Positioned in a sun-synchronous orbit for consistent observations

INSAT-3DR:

- ➔ **Launch Date:** INSAT-3DR was launched on September 8, 2016.
- ➔ **Type:** Geostationary satellite primarily for meteorological and search-and-rescue operations.
- ➔ **Purpose:** Provides real-time data on weather patterns, climate monitoring, and disaster management.
- ➔ **Significance:** Enhances weather forecasting accuracy and supports emergency response during natural disasters.

- ➔ **Orbit:** Maintains a fixed position over the Indian subcontinent for continuous monitoring.

Cyclone Dana

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Satellites tracking Cyclone Dana since October 20: ISRO

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday said its polar orbiting satellite EOS-06 and geostationary satellite INSAT-3DR had been tracking the Cyclone Dana since October 20.

"Cyclonic storm Dana is fast approaching the coastal districts of Odisha and West Bengal. ISRO polar orbiting satellite EOS-06 and geostationary satellite INSAT-3DR are regularly providing valuable information on the cyclone status. ISRO polar orbiting satellite EOS-06



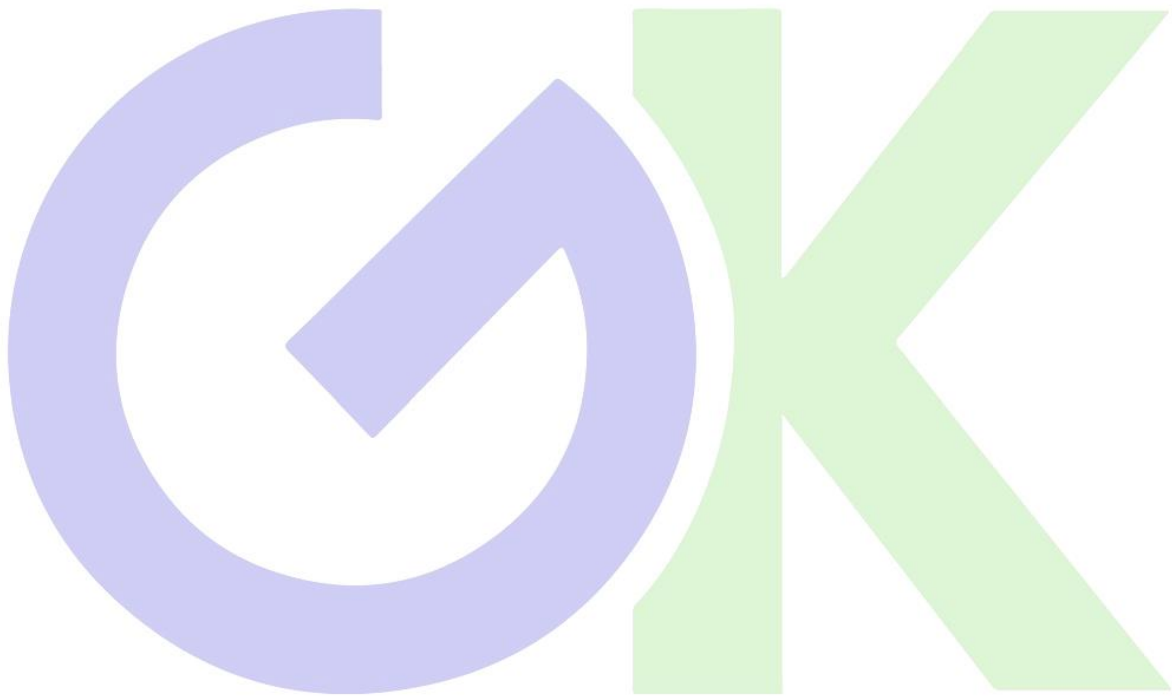
ISRO rocket carrying EOS-06 satellite in 2022.

Scatterometer sensor provides the status of ocean winds and their circulation well before the formation of the cyclone," the space agency said.

It stated that the satellite inputs help in better monitoring and mitigation of the cyclone threat to India.

Daily News Analysis

- Cyclone Dana has formed over the east-central Bay of Bengal and is expected to make landfall between Bhitarkanika and Dhamra areas of Odisha on the night of October 24.
- Wind speeds are projected to reach 100-120 kmph, with heavy rainfall anticipated in coastal and northern Odisha.



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Germany and India are finalising a logistics support agreement to enhance defence cooperation.

- This arrangement aims to facilitate joint exercises and support co-development of defence equipment.

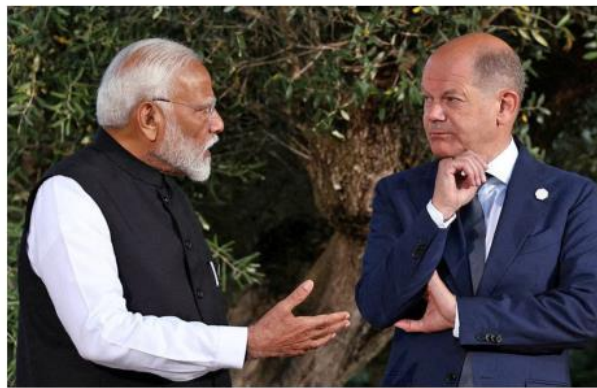
India, Germany discussing military logistics support agreement: official

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

India and Germany are close to finalising a memorandum of arrangement for logistics arrangement between the armed forces, according to a senior German official. With focus on expanding maritime security cooperation, Germany is set to post a liaison officer at the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region in Gurugram.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz arrived in India on Thursday night on an official visit accompanied by eight senior Ministers. He is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday morning.

A memorandum of arrangement for logistics arrangement between the armed forces for cooperation and joint exercises in one of the two countries or the surrounding maritime domains is in the works, said Jasper Wieck, political director in the German Ministry of Defence. "With



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. FILE PHOTO

the likelihood that this arrangement will also facilitate co-development and co-production and joint research...," he said.

Mr. Wieck was speaking at the India-German defence industry dialogue organised by the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers.

Pushing for co-development and co-production of defence equipment, he said they have specific areas in mind. Underwater technology, which brings in the Project-75I programme of the Indian Navy

for six conventional submarines in which Germany's TKMS is competing with Navantia of Spain, is one of them.

Other areas are cruise missiles, with MBDA as a potential partner, and drones. An agreement for peacekeeping training agreement between respective agencies in both countries is also on the anvil.

Last week, the German government had adopted a focus document on India which says that Germany wants to be a reliable

partner to India, Mr. Wieck said.

Officials said that Germany is keen on repair and maintenance of German ships in the region in India, on the lines of U.K. and U.S., which have been leveraging the logistics agreement for this purpose.

Stressing on the importance attached by Germany in deepening partnership with India, officials said that since the visit of German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius in June 2023, a lot of export licences have been given. Over 95% of the licences have been cleared, the German envoy Philipp Ackermann said on Wednesday (October 23, 2024).

Mr. Modi and Mr. Scholz will address the 18th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business 2024 with about 800 CEOs of various companies attending. The two sides will hold talks as part of the 7th Inter-Governmental Consultations and a number of agreements are expected to be concluded.

Analysis of the news:

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Daily News Analysis

- ▶ India and Germany are close to finalising a memorandum of arrangement for logistics cooperation between their armed forces.
- ▶ The arrangement aims to enhance maritime security cooperation, including posting a liaison officer at the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre in Gurugram.
- ▶ The agreement will facilitate joint exercises and may support co-development and co-production initiatives in defence.
- ▶ Key focus areas include underwater technology, cruise missiles, and drones.
- ▶ Germany seeks to establish repair and maintenance capabilities for its ships in India.
- ▶ A significant number of export licences have been granted to deepen defence collaboration since June 2023.
- ▶ Both countries plan to sign a peacekeeping training agreement and explore further cooperation.

What is a Logistics Support Agreement?

- ▶ A Logistics Support Agreement (LSA) is a deal between two countries to help each other out with supplies and services for their military.
- ▶ This can include things like equipment, supplies, and services needed for joint operations or exercises.
- ▶ **India's LSAs:**
 - India has signed Logistics Support Agreements (LSAs) with several countries to enhance military cooperation and interoperability.
 - These countries include the United States, France, Australia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Russia.
 - These agreements facilitate reciprocal access to military bases, fuel, and other logistical support, enabling closer collaboration and joint operations between the Indian military and its partners.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna is set to become the 51st Chief Justice of India on November 11, 2024, succeeding Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud.

- ▶ With a distinguished career marked by significant rulings, he is poised to lead the Supreme Court until his retirement on May 13, 2025.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna appointed next CJ, to take oath on Nov. 11

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday notified the appointment of Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the 51st Chief Justice of India with effect from November 11.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Judge of the Supreme Court, to be the Chief Justice of India with effect from November 11, 2024," the Department of Justice notification read.

Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, who is scheduled to retire on November 10, had recommended Justice Khanna as his successor in office, on October 17.

Born on May 14, 1960, Justice Khanna enrolled as an advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1983.

He was senior standing counsel for the Income Tax Department and had also functioned as standing counsel for the National Capital Territory of Delhi. He was elevated as an Additional Judge of the Delhi High Court in 2005 and made a Permanent Judge in 2006.

He was appointed a



Justice Sanjiv Khanna

Judge of the Supreme Court on January 18, 2019. Justice Khanna was ranked 33 in the combined seniority of High Court judges on an all-India basis, but the then Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi had recommended him over others on grounds of merit and integrity.

Important cases

Justice Khanna had led the Supreme Court which gave interim bail to former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections of 2024. He was also a member of the Constitution Bench which upheld the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in Jammu and Kashmir.

Justice Khanna is due to retire on May 13, 2025.

Appointment of Chief Justice of India

- ▶ The seniormost Judge of the Supreme Court is appointed as Chief Justice.
- ▶ The outgoing Chief Justice recommends the next Chief Justice to the Union Minister of Law.
- ▶ If fitness is in doubt, consultation with other Judges is required.

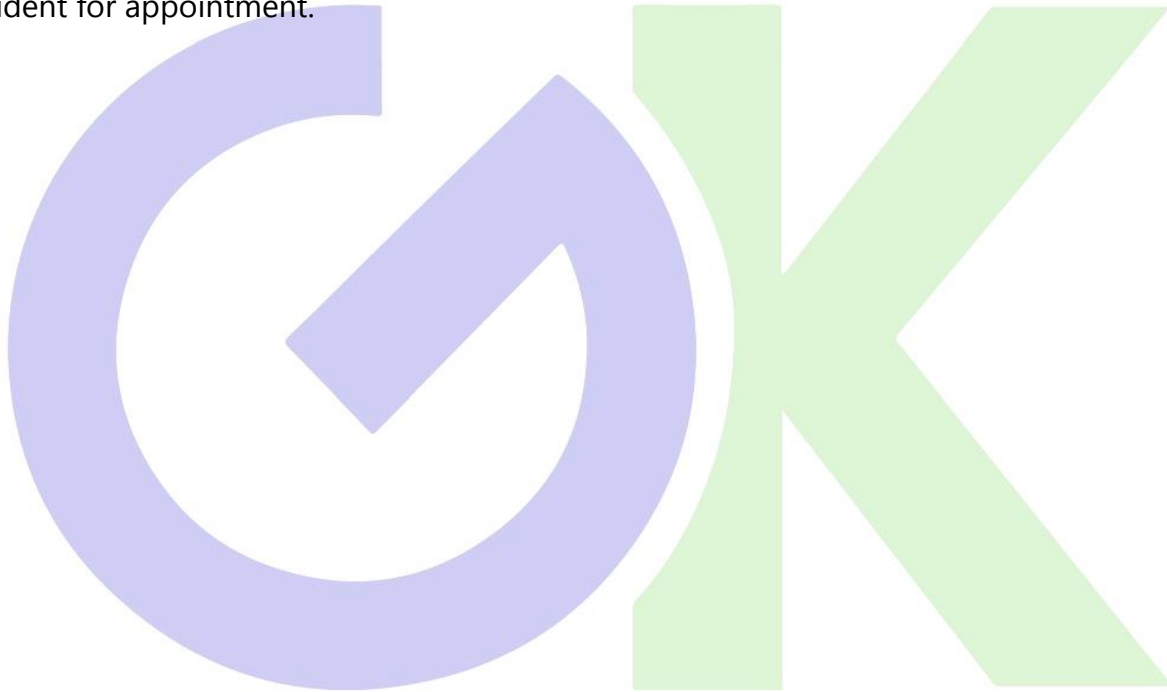
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- ➡ The Union Minister presents the recommendation to the Prime Minister, who advises the President for appointment.

Appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court

- ➡ The Chief Justice initiates the proposal for filling vacancies.
- ➡ Recommendations are made in consultation with the collegium of four seniormost Judges.
- ➡ The incoming Chief Justice, if not in the collegium, joins the selection process.
- ➡ The views of the seniormost Judge from the relevant High Court are sought.
- ➡ Written opinions from the collegium and the concerned Judge are submitted to the Government.
- ➡ The Union Minister presents these recommendations to the Prime Minister, who advises the President for appointment.



- The Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) is set to start from October 23 to 29, 2024, in Visakhapatnam. This exercise aims to enhance interoperability and address common maritime challenges in the region.



Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX):

- **History:** SIMBEX originated as 'Exercise Lion King' in 1994 and has evolved into a key maritime collaboration between the Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy.
- **Structure of 2024 Exercise: The exercise consists of two phases:**
 - **Harbour Phase (October 23-25):** Includes Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, cross-deck visits, sports, and pre-sail briefings.
 - **Sea Phase (October 28-29):** Features advanced naval drills, live weapon firings, anti-submarine warfare training, and tactical maneuvers.
 - **Participants:** Participants include the Republic of Singapore Navy Ship RSS Tenacious and the Indian Navy.

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India achieved a significant public health victory by eliminating trachoma as a health problem on October 8, 2024, marking a milestone in reducing its prevalence despite ongoing challenges.

➔ This success underscores the importance of public health efforts in improving lives and preventing disease.

Trachoma eliminated as a public health problem in India; what next?

The achievement marked a significant public health victory for the country and has profound economic implications. Trachoma's impact, through blindness and visual impairment, results in an estimated economic loss of \$2.9 to 5.3 billion annually due to reduced productivity. India successfully reduced prevalence to 0.7%

C. Aravinda

October 12, 2024, an incident at Trichy Airport involving an aircraft malfunction kept the aircraft circling in the skies for hours. The pilots' efforts to safely land the plane, preventing potential disaster, captured the public's imagination. Their actions were tangible, immediate, and visible, making it easy for people to appreciate the significance of their work. This event dominated headlines, occupied significant airtime and social media space, while just days earlier, another important achievement unfolded rather quietly: on October 8, India's health system achieved a quiet but equally important victory in eliminating trachoma as a public health problem – a success far less visible but just as impactful.

Public health works face the paradox where the nature of their work makes failures highly tangible and visible, leading to headlines, while their successes remain intangible, often going unnoticed despite their significant impact.

Acknowledging these achievements is essential, as they reflect the dedication and perseverance of countless individuals working behind the scenes to prevent blindness and improve lives. The achievement marked a significant public health victory and has profound economic implications.

Trachoma's impact, through blindness and visual impairment, results in an estimated economic loss of \$2.9 to 5.3 billion annually due to reduced productivity.

Trachoma, a chronic infectious eye disease, affects regions with poor hygiene and sanitation. The disease primarily affects young children and women in areas with limited clean water and sanitation access. *Chlamydia trachomatis*, the bacterium responsible for trachoma, has serotypes A, B, Ba, and C, which cause eye infections. These infections lead to symptoms such as eye irritation, discharge, swollen eyelids, sensitivity to light, and, in severe cases, blurred vision. If left untreated, repeated infections can cause scarring of the inner eyelid and eventually blindness.

Trachoma is transmitted through contact with eye secretions from an infected person's fingers, contaminated towels or clothes, or flies (*Musca sorbens*) touching the infected secretions, often exacerbated by poor hygiene and overcrowded living conditions.

Trachoma is one of 20 diseases the World Health Organization (WHO) has classified as neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and seeks to eliminate by 2030.



Trachoma affects regions with poor hygiene and sanitation. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NTDs disproportionately affect impoverished communities, and controlling them is a key target under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Target 3.3).

While many developed nations have long eliminated trachoma, countries like India have struggled due to socio-economic and environmental challenges.

India's success in significantly reducing trachoma prevalence is largely attributed to the WHO's SAFE strategy, which has been pivotal in global trachoma elimination efforts. The SAFE acronym stands for surgery to correct trichiasis (misdirected eyelashes), antibiotics to treat and control the infection, facial cleanliness to reduce transmission, and environmental improvements such as access to clean water and sanitation.

WHO's Criteria

The WHO defines trachoma as eliminated as a health problem when prevalence of trachomatous trichiasis falls below 0.2% in people aged 15 years and above. The prevalence of active trachoma in children aged 1-9 years is less than 5% in endemic countries. It also includes a health system capable of managing new cases. Reaching these thresholds is a significant milestone, but it does not equate to the total eradication of the disease.

In 2005, trachoma accounted for 4% of all blindness cases in India. Remarkably, by 2018, this figure declined to just 0.008% of all blindness.

Even with India's commendable achievement of a 0.7% prevalence, sporadic cases can still exist.

The elimination target means that the disease's burden has been significantly reduced but not eradicated. This

Trachoma is transmitted through contact with eye secretions from an infected person's fingers, contaminated towels or clothes, or flies touching secretions exacerbated by poor hygiene

distinction is crucial in epidemiology, where reaching elimination is a major milestone.

India has conducted three major trachoma prevalence surveys, the most recent from 2014 to 2017.

Historically, trachoma was highly endemic, especially in northern states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The national surveys conducted in the 20th century demonstrated alarming rates of infection, but successive public health measures have drastically reduced the burden.

However, this achievement does not mean India is free from trachoma. The term "elimination as a public health problem" signifies that trachoma is no longer a significant threat, but sporadic cases may still exist.

This is an important distinction. While India has achieved the elimination of trachoma as a "public health problem," this does not mean that the disease and transmission have been eliminated. There is often confusion between the two terms: elimination as a public health problem and elimination of disease.

The former refers to reducing disease prevalence to such low levels that it no longer poses a significant public health threat. In contrast, the latter implies very negligible to zero transmission of the disease, as seen in India's polio, measles,

and guinea worm infection levels.

Epidemiological challenges

From an epidemiological standpoint, achieving the elimination threshold is like an associate member country of the ICC being granted test status – it's a milestone, but maintaining this status requires continuous effort and excellence. Similarly, India has reached an impressive point in the fight against trachoma, but to sustain it, efforts must be ongoing. Developed countries achieved trachoma elimination much earlier in the 1950s.

The road to completely eradicating trachoma is long due to lack of vaccines. With no long-lasting protective immunity and the presence of active trachoma cases, the focus must remain on interrupting the transmission cycle of the disease through sustained improvements in sanitation, access to clean water, and continued health education.

India's progress has been remarkable, but it is essential to continue the battle with the same vigour.

The WHO's decision not to set an eradication target for trachoma (unlike yaws and guinea worm) reflects the complex epidemiological challenges. Surveillance systems must be vigilant to catch cases early and prevent resurgence.

The National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI) needs to regularly conduct surveys, at least once a decade, across all districts to detect any new cases and prevent the resurgence of the disease to maintain India's status as free from trachoma as a public health threat.

It's time public health workers receive the acknowledgement they've earned for protecting the nation's health, and we should keep striving to tackle future challenges with the same determination. Eliminating trachoma as a public health problem is a significant achievement for India, and the journey continues.

Ongoing surveillance, adherence to the SAFE strategy, and initiatives like Swachh Bharat will be critical in ensuring that trachoma remains a disease of the past. We should keep up the momentum.

The government must be committed to this goal, ensuring that India's children can grow up in a world free from trachoma. This validation should serve as a reminder that, with continued collective effort, we can also target and eliminate other diseases like kala-azar and tuberculosis. The success against trachoma shows that even in tough conditions, coordinated efforts can bring about change.

(Dr. C. Aravinda is an academic and a public health physician. aravindaatinsjrto@hotmail.com)

THE GIST

The WHO classifies trachoma as one of 20 neglected tropical diseases, which it seeks to eliminate by 2030. While developed nations have eliminated trachoma, countries like India have struggled

India's success in reducing trachoma prevalence is largely attributed to the SAFE strategy, which stands for surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness, and environmental improvements such as access to clean water and sanitation

Elimination of trachoma as a 'public health problem,' does not mean the disease and transmission have been eliminated. Negligible to zero transmission, as seen in India's polio, measles, and guinea worm infection levels, has not been achieved

What is Trachoma?

- ➔ Trachoma is a chronic infectious eye disease caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
- ➔ It primarily affects young children and women in areas with poor hygiene, sanitation, and limited access to clean water.

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- The disease leads to symptoms like eye irritation, discharge, swollen eyelids, and, in severe cases, blindness due to scarring of the inner eyelid.

Impact of Trachoma in India

- Trachoma was responsible for about 4% of all blindness cases in India in 2005.
- It imposes an estimated economic loss of \$2.9 to \$5.3 billion annually due to reduced productivity associated with blindness and visual impairment.
- Trachoma's transmission is exacerbated by poor living conditions and hygiene practices, particularly in northern states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

Elimination of Trachoma in India

- India has achieved the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem, with a prevalence of 0.7%.
- The WHO's SAFE strategy (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial cleanliness, and Environmental improvements) has been instrumental in this success.
- Despite this achievement, sporadic cases may still exist, necessitating ongoing surveillance and health education to maintain the elimination status and prevent resurgence.

GS Paper 02 : Social Justice – Education

UPSC Mains Practice Question : Examine how the NCPCR's directive on madrasas affects minority rights and India's commitment to secularism. (250 Words /15 marks)

Context :

- The Supreme Court's stay on the NCPCR's directive to halt funding for non-RTE-compliant madrasas has stirred concern among secular and minority communities.
- The NCPCR's approach is viewed as potentially divisive, raising questions about India's secular education traditions and minority rights.
- The issue highlights tensions between constitutional rights and policy decisions.

Introduction and Background

- The Supreme Court of India has stayed the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) recommendations that aimed to halt government funding for madrasas not compliant with the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, and to conduct inspections on these institutions.
- The move, viewed as potentially targeting minority rights, has stirred apprehensions among secular and minority communities.

The CPC Act and Child Rights Concerns

- The Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005, is hailed as progressive, aiming to safeguard vulnerable children in India.
- Despite the pressing issues of child trafficking, beggary, and child labour, the NCPCR's focus on madrasas seems disproportionate, raising concerns of bias.

Madrasa System: Concept and History

- NCPCR has suggested the exclusion of non-Muslim students from madrasas, despite evidence that these institutions serve children from multiple religious backgrounds.
- Historically, madrasas provided education accessible to all, especially when formal education was scarce.
- Figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Munshi Premchand studied at madrasas, indicating their inclusive and secular legacy.

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- The term madrasa historically refers to a school, with no inherent link to extremist training, unlike its association with Taliban-run institutions in Afghanistan.

The Historical Role of Madrasas

- Madrasas have been present since the Delhi Sultanate era and were patronised by dynasties like the Khilji and Tughlaq. Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta noted that Firoz Shah Tughlaq promoted education for women and slaves in madrasas.
- Christian communities in Kerala also established schools next to churches, open to children from all backgrounds, illustrating the cultural openness to diverse educational sources in India.

Social Justice over Appeasement

- Kerala, which upholds a strong public education system, does not require government aid for madrasas, countering misinformation that the state funds these institutions.
- The Madrasa Teachers' Welfare Fund, like other statutory employee welfare funds, provides pensions and benefits, supporting the principle of social justice.

Constitutional Right to Freedom of Religion

- Article 25 of the Indian Constitution protects every citizen's right to profess, practice, and propagate their religion.
- All educational institutions, religious or secular, are expected to operate within the legal framework, while avoiding alienation of minorities, which the NCPCR's actions risk promoting.

An Aggressive Majoritarianism

- Secular values are crucial for India's unity in diversity; therefore, instilling pluralistic beliefs in younger generations is essential.
- Figures like Sree Narayana Guru have promoted the unity of all religions, stressing the shared essence of diverse faiths.
- The recent NCPCR actions are viewed within a socio-political context of increased insecurity for religious minorities, fueled by majoritarian sentiments and polarising rhetoric.

Conclusion

- By promoting division rather than unity, the NCPCR risks alienating minority communities, contradicting the inclusive vision embodied in India's Constitution.
- Upholding constitutional values, the public urges NCPCR to withdraw its directive, recognizing the harm that such actions could inflict on India's social fabric and communal harmony.