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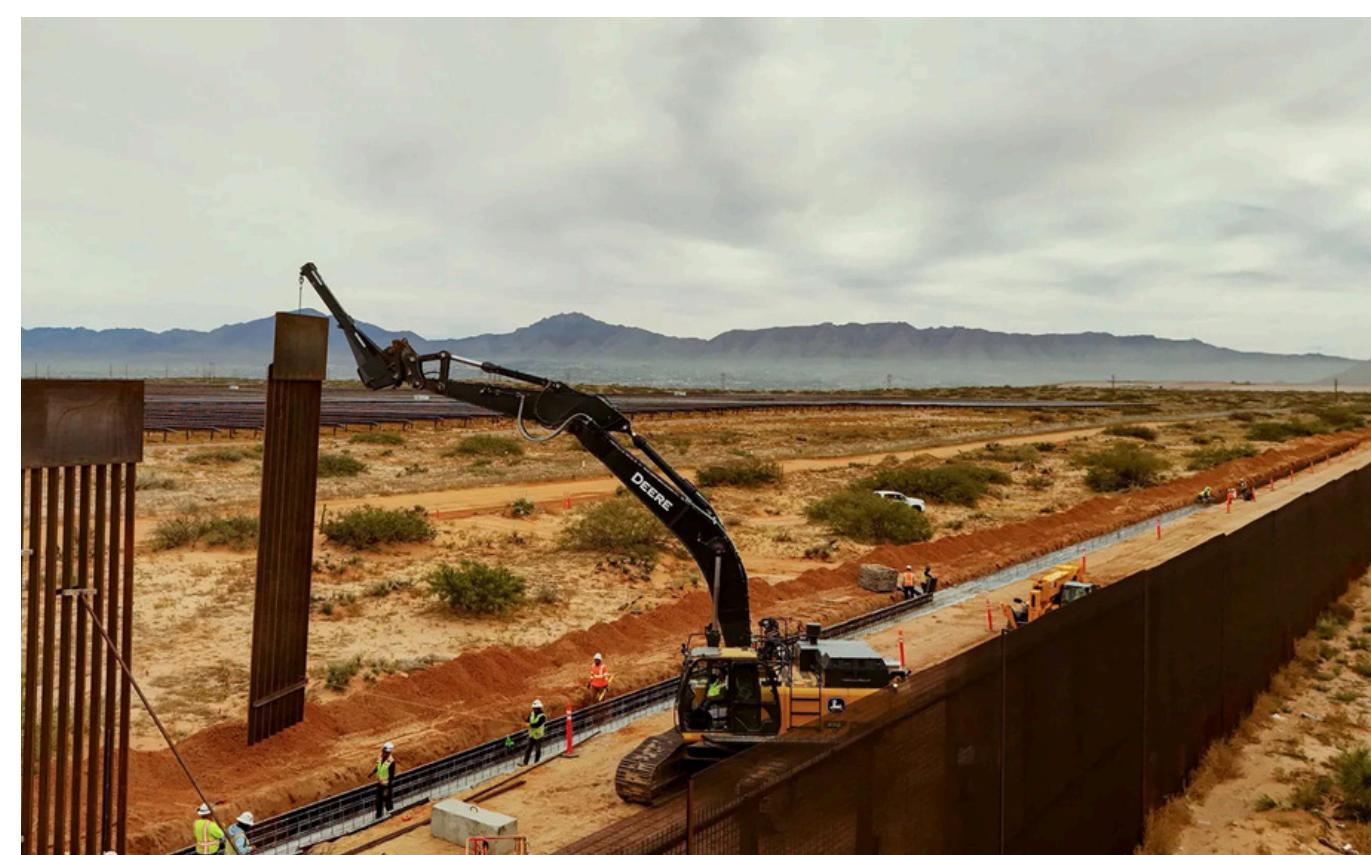
Courts cannot fetter President, Governor: SC



A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday answered the 16th Presidential Reference the country has witnessed by opining that the judiciary cannot fetter Governors and the President to "one-size-fits all" time-tables to dispose of State Bills or usurp their functions by assuming "deemed consent" of the proposed laws at the expiry of a court-ordered time frame. It said an advisory opinion "can overrule, if necessary".

"Such a usurpation of the gubernatorial function of the Governor, and similarly of the President's functions, is antithetical not only to the spirit of the Constitution, but also specifically, the doctrine of separation of powers — which is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution," a Bench of Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, Chief Justice-designate Surya Kant, and Justices Vikram Nath, P.S Narasimha and A.S. Chandurkar underscored in their answer. However, the court clarified that the President and Governors cannot resort to "prolonged and evasive in action" by sitting endlessly on State Bills awaiting their approval. The Reference under Article 143 of the Constitution came merely a month after a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, in a judgment in the Tamil Nadu Governor case on April 8, plugged a constitutional silence by fixing a three-month time limit for Governors and the President to dispose of State Bills pending with them. The Bench propounded that the Supreme Court cannot judicially review the merits of the decision taken by the Governor under Article 200. The Governor enjoyed absolute immunity from court proceedings under Article 361.

Mexico Border Wall!



Machinery and workers during the construction of a new section of the border wall in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, on the U.S.-Mexico border, as seen from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.



Leaders of various trade unions met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here on Thursday for the customary pre-Budget consultations and submitted a memorandum demanding that resource mobilisation has to be done by increasing corporate tax and wealth tax and introducing inheritance tax instead of burdening common masses with the Goods and Services Tax on essential food items and medicine.

Why are stone quarries expanding in Kerala?

- Kerala imposed a ban on river sand mining in January 2016 to protect rivers and ecosystems from unchecked extraction and environmental degradation.
- The ban led to the rise of "manufactured sand" (M-sand), an artificial alternative produced by crushing hard rock, which quickly became popular for construction needs.

Expansion of Stone Quarries

- Following the river sand ban, stone quarrying surged, with a significant number of new quarries and rapid expansion of existing quarries, even near protected areas.
- Scientists from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Calicut analyzed satellite data and identified a 232% growth in quarry size near protected areas in 2016 alone; other quarries in the buffer zones of Silent Valley National Park also doubled in size.
- Out of 72 quarries identified within 10 km of protected areas, expansions coincided with the river sand mining ban, reflecting a rapid industry response to sand demand.

Environmental Impact and Concerns

- Researchers concluded that further expansion of stone quarrying could harm biodiversity, especially as many quarries are located near ecologically sensitive zones.
- The extraction shift has altered landscape and channel morphology, degrading ecosystem quality and biota in rivers, as observed in long term studies from 1970-2020.
- The increased use of M-sand has led to wider quarrying-related environmental and social trade-offs, including micro-level ecosystem impact, livelihood disruptions, and potential "blue injustices" (injustices affecting water and aquatic ecosystems).

Issues with Sand Mining Regulation

- This highlights the complexity of regulating sand mining and extraction in India, stressing that outright bans can shift pressures toward other forms of resource extraction with their own ecological and social costs.
- The boom in demand for sand (both river and marine) continues, driven by the construction industry and ongoing urbanization, especially in coastal and urban centers.

Socioeconomic and Policy Implications

- This suggests that policy solutions need to account for the broader, interconnected impacts of such bans and industry shifts—balancing environmental sustainability with the realities of construction demand and rural livelihoods. Recommendations include integrating better data on on-site and off-site mining impacts, adapting regulations dynamically, and incorporating perspectives of local communities and welfare.

In a first, Indian-born cheetah Mukhi gives birth to five cubs

- For the first time since the start of the Cheetah Reintroduction Project in India, an Indian-born female cheetah—Mukhi—has given birth to five cubs in Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- This marks an unprecedented achievement, signifying successful reproduction among cheetahs bred in India, as highlighted by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

Boost to India's Cheetah Population

- The new litter raises India's cheetah population to 32, including 21 Indian-born cheetahs, with most housed at Kuno and three relocated to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Conservation and Scientific Importance

- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav called the event a "delightful breakthrough" for the cheetah reintroduction initiative, reinforcing hopes of establishing a genetically diverse and self-sustaining cheetah population in India.
- The Minister emphasized the significance of the event for advancing India's conservation objectives.

Health of Cubs and Reproduction Details

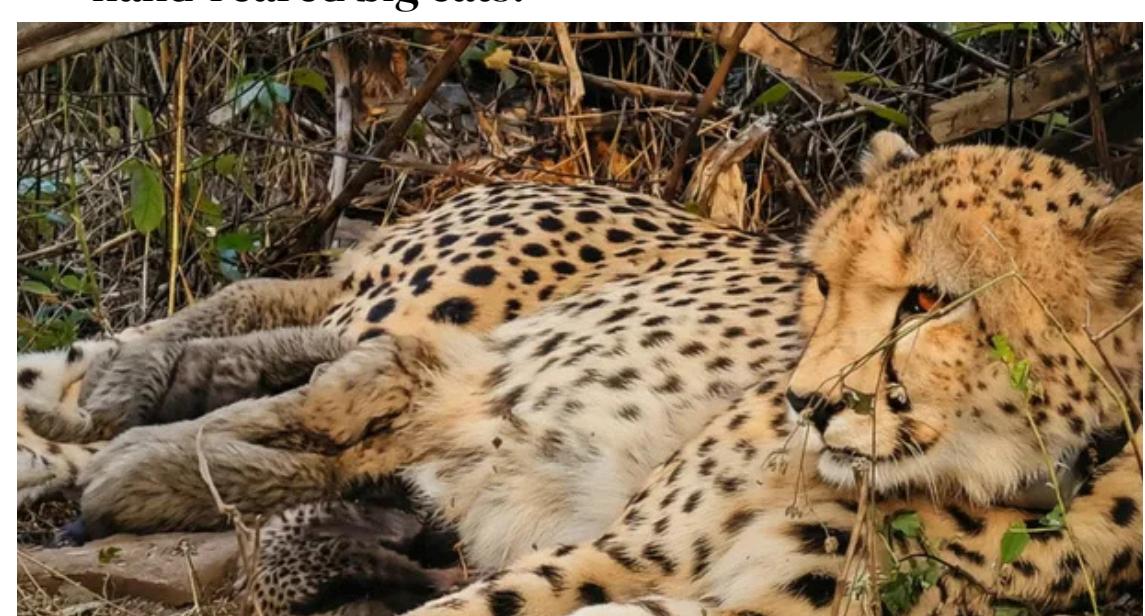
- Uttam Kumar Sharma, Field Director of Kuno National Park, reported that all five cubs appeared healthy and were being well-cared for by Mukhi.
- Mukhi was born on March 29, 2023, to Namibian cheetah Jwala but was abandoned by her mother soon after birth; efforts to reunite her with Jwala failed, so Mukhi was instead hand-reared by park authorities.

Management and Care Approach

- The Kuno National Park management took care to prevent human imprinting during Mukhi's upbringing, aiming for eventual rewilding and natural behaviors.

Implications for Wildlife Reintroduction in India

- The birth supports optimism for the long-term viability and success of the cheetah reintroduction program, impacting future policy and conservation science for similar species reintroductions.
- Demonstrates both the challenges and triumphs of conservation management, particularly in fostering reproduction among reintroduced or hand-reared big cats.



Coastal security exercise begins in two T.N. districts

Purpose and Scope of the Exercise

- A joint coastal security exercise named 'Sagar Kavach' was launched to assess the preparedness and alertness of various stakeholders in coastal security operations in Tamil Nadu.
- The drill is taking place in Cuddalore and Villupuram districts, involving multiple agencies including the Coast Guard, Indian Navy, district police, and the Coastal Security Group of the Tamil Nadu police, along with other stakeholders.

Structure and Execution

- The two-day exercise, concluding on Friday, is conducted in various stages, testing teams on aspects such as protecting high-value targets, collecting intelligence, interception of intrusions, detection of sabotage, and interrogation of intruders.
- Teams are also responsible for monitoring railways, bus stands, and other vital installations as part of the operation.

Field Operations and Simulations

- The Coastal Security Group patrolled the sea using boats, checking both fishermen in the sea and boats anchored at harbours for any suspicious activity.
- Enhanced surveillance was maintained in coastal villages, with personnel alert for unusual activity and efforts to sensitize fishermen against security threats.

Red Force Simulation and Outcomes

- Five Red Force members, simulating an adversary/aggressor, were sent as dummies to Thazhanguda coast and were "secured" by the Coastal Security Group, testing the response to a mock infiltration.
- This simulated intrusion component is a critical test of both detection and rapid response mechanisms.

Importance and Broader Context

- This highlights the integration and coordination among maritime and land security agencies to address evolving coastal security threats.
- Such exercises are vital for improving the state's overall response to possible intrusions, smuggling, or sabotage in sensitive coastal areas, considering historic vulnerabilities along India's eastern coast.

Mizoram govt. completes biometric enrolment of 58% of Myanmar refugees

- The Mizoram government has achieved 58.15% biometric enrolment of the 31,214 Myanmar asylum seekers residing in the state's 11 districts.
- Additionally, 10.84% of the 2,354 refugees from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have also had their biometric and biographic data collected.

Challenges and Limitations

- The biometric exercise faced obstacles primarily due to slow or absent internet connectivity, which has hindered data collection, especially in remote border areas.
- Identifying refugees living outside designated relief camps is another major challenge, affecting the pace of enrolment.
- Authorities noted that efforts are significant despite these challenges because the government has prioritized compassion and kinship, viewing the refugees as "blood and kindred brothers and sisters".

Social and Demographic Context

- The majority of Myanmar refugees in Mizoram are members of the Chin and Bawm ethnic groups, who are closely related to the local Mizo community.
- Many Bawms and Chins began arriving after the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar or after military offensives in Bangladesh's CHT a year later.

Distribution and Settlement Patterns

- Most Chin refugees from Myanmar are located in Champhai district, while Bawms from the CHT are concentrated in Lawngtlai district.
- The biometric enrolment began in July, following Ministry of Home Affairs orders, and is ongoing via the designated foreigners' identification portal.

Technical and Logistical Hurdles

- Difficult terrain, remote locations, and lack of connectivity impede fieldwork and data uploads, causing further delays.
- Some refugees live with relatives or friends in rental accommodations instead of designated camps, complicating tracking and registration efforts.

Broader Implications and Next Steps

- Officers cited the humanitarian spirit of the exercise, ensuring that state policies do not discriminate against refugees related by ethnicity and kinship to the local population.
- Despite partial progress, the government is keen to continue the enrolment drive to ensure documentation and support for all refugees while addressing logistical gaps and community needs.

Ajit Doval hosts seventh meeting of Colombo Security Conclave in Delhi

- The seventh National Security Adviser (NSA)-level meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) was held in Delhi, hosted by India's NSA Ajit Doval.
- Member states included India, Maldives, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh; Malaysia and Seychelles attended as observers or as part of the CSC grouping.

Focus of the Meeting

- Member states concentrated discussions on five pillars of cooperation: maritime safety and security, countering terrorism and radicalisation, combating trafficking and transnational organised crime, cyber security, and protection of critical infrastructure and disaster relief.
- Enhanced cooperation on training and capacity building was also discussed as a top priority.

Security Context and Goals

- The meeting began with a comprehensive review of security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region, aiming for collective responses to threats like terrorism, cyberattacks, and natural disasters.
- The aim was to strengthen regional security architecture and forge a coordinated approach to new and emerging threats.

Participation and Statements

- Key representatives included NSA Ibrahim Latheef (Maldives), NSA Rahul Rasgotra (Mauritius), Air Vice Marshal Sampath Thuyacontha (Sri Lanka), Dr Khalilur Rahman (Bangladesh), and Major General Michael Rosette (Seychelles), with Malaysia represented for the first time by Shah Mohd. Idris.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs highlighted the reinforced commitment to CSC's objectives and underlined consensus among member states for the identified cooperation pillars.

Broader Cooperation and Implications

- This underscores that the CSI meeting demonstrated growing regional commitment to security, stability, and collaborative capacity-building across the Indian Ocean region.
- The inclusion of new observer states and the focus on issues like cyber security show the conclave's flexible and evolving approach to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats.

At COP, India seeks 'just transition mechanism'

- India, joined by other developing countries, is seeking the creation of a 'just transition mechanism' at the ongoing COP climate summit to support a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and sustainable livelihoods.
- The focus is on ensuring that finance for adaptation to climate change is treated as an "essential investment" and not just an "optional add-on," highlighting current shortfalls in funding.

Background on Just Transition Work Programme

- The Just Transition Work Programme was established at COP27 and operationalised at COP28 (2023) to facilitate sustainable job creation for those moving from fossil fuel-dependent sectors to renewable energy and other green livelihoods.
- The work programme aims to enhance resilience, adaptive capacity, employment, social protection, and financial support for affected communities.

Flexibility and Country-Specific Pathways

- Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav emphasized the need for flexibility, allowing countries to design and implement sustainable development strategies based on their national circumstances and priorities.
- India supports a flexible 'Global Goal on Adaptation'—a system of metrics to enable countries to assess their vulnerability, adaptation needs, and funding requirements.

Points of Negotiation and Political Divisions

- There is a debate among participating countries about the language of COP texts: whether to mandate a pathway or a roadmap for the use of fossil fuels, which divides developed and developing nations.
- Developed countries favor language emphasizing cost-effective finance, while developing nations stress the need for flexibility and contextual approaches to transition and adaptation.

Key Policy Statements and India's Position

- Bhupender Yadav reiterated India's stance that climate adaptation financing should not be a supplementary issue but a fundamental and adequately funded element of the global response to climate change.
- This notes that developing countries require both policy space and financial support to drive inclusive, equitable transitions, referencing the importance of country-driven efforts to meet both climate/environmental and development goals.

Expected Outcomes and Ongoing Negotiations

- India's advocacy at COP centers on the twin goals of "systemic vulnerability" support and the need for an integrated approach that advances both climate and development agendas.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1.The Matabari Tourism Circuit which aims to boost cultural, spiritual, and eco-tourism is to be set up in which state?

- (a) Nagaland**
- (b) Tripura**
- (c) Assam**
- (d) Sikkim**

2.Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in April during Baisakhi in which of the following states?

- (a) Bihar**
- (b) Uttar Pradesh**
- (c) Uttarakhand**
- (d) Assam**

3.Which one of the following gases is the primary cause of Ocean acidification?

- (a) Methane**
- (b) Carbon monoxide**
- (c) Carbon dioxide**
- (d) Sulphur dioxide**

4.Which is the only national park that protects endangered Nilgiri tahr?

- (a) Periyar National Park**
- (b) Eravikulam National Park**
- (c) Kaziranga National Park**
- (d) Gir National Park**

DETAILED ANSWER KEY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE CHRONICLE PAGE

Eight core sectors put up worst ever show in 14 months

- Industrial activity in India's eight core sectors remained flat at 0% growth in October 2025, marking the worst performance in 14 months, according to official data.
- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) showed zero growth, a sharp decline from 3.8% in October 2024 and 3% in September 2025.
- This is the poorest result since August last year, when the index had contracted by 1.5%.

Composition of Core Sectors

- The eight core sectors are: coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizers, steel, cement, and electricity, collectively representing 40.27% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Major Growth and Decline Factors

- The flat growth in October was due to only modest increases in steel, cement, fertilizers, and refinery products, which were negated by contractions in key areas like coal, electricity, natural gas, and crude oil.
- Steel registered 6.7% growth in October 2025 (second-highest among core sectors), but this was still a six-month low for the sector.
- Cement grew by 5.3%, up from last October's 3.1%, but down from 5.9% in September 2025.
- Fertilizers experienced the fastest growth at 7.4%, the best in seven months.
- Refinery products rose by 4.6%, the sector's best in nine months.

Sectors in Contraction

- Coal sector output declined by 8.5%, attributed to subdued demand and prolonged monsoon effects.
- Natural gas output shrank by 5%—the worst in seven months—while crude oil production declined by 1.2%.
- Power and mining sectors were also affected, contributing to the overall flat trajectory of core sector performance.

Broader Economic Impact

- The slowdown in core sector growth is expected to impact the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), with ICRA's chief economist predicting a drop in IIP growth to about 2.5-3.5% in October from 4% in September.
- This highlights that stagnation in the core sectors poses challenges for industrial recovery, economic momentum, and investment sentiment going forward.



Fourteen questions and court's responses

The Presidential Reference came after the April 8 judgment of the Supreme Court that granted 'deemed assent' to 10 Tamil Nadu Bills

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

While it is not appropriate for the judiciary to impose timelines on the President and Governors, in glaring circumstances of indefinite inaction, the court can intervene, the Supreme Court said in its advisory to the Presidential Reference. Here are the 14 questions posed by the President and the court's responses:

What are the constitutional options before a Governor when a Bill is presented to him under Article 200 of the Constitution?

To assent, reserve the Bill for the consideration of the President, or withhold assent and return the Bill to the legislature with comments if the Bill is not a Money Bill.

Is the Governor bound by the aid and advice tendered by the Council of Ministers under Article 200?

The Governor enjoys discretion and is not bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.

Is the exercise of constitutional discretion by the Governor under Article 200 justiciable?

The discharge of the Governor's function under Article 200, is not justiciable.

However, in glaring circumstances of indefinite inaction, the court has a limited power to issue a mandamus to the Governor to decide within a reasonable time period.

Is Article 361 an absolute bar to judicial review in relation to the actions of a Governor under Article 200?

Article 361 is an absolute bar on judicial review in relation to personally subjecting the Governor to judicial proceedings.

Can timelines be imposed under Article 200?

It is not appropriate as the Constitution is silent.

Is exercise of constitutional discretion by the President under Article 201 justiciable?

For the same reasoning as held with respect to the Governor, the President's assent too is not justiciable.

Can the President be bound to timelines while exercising power under Article 201?

For the same reasons as indicated in the context of the Governor, the President, too, cannot be bound by judicially prescribed timelines.

Is the President required to seek advice of the Supreme Court whenever a Governor reserves a Bill for assent?

The President is not required to seek SC's advice. Subjective satisfaction of the President is sufficient.

Are decisions of the Governor and President under Article 200 and Article 201 justiciable at a stage anterior into the law coming into force?

The decisions of the Governor and President under Articles 200 and 201 are not justiciable at a stage anterior into the law coming into force.

It is impermissible for courts to undertake judicial adjudication over the contents of a Bill before it becomes law.

Can the exercise of constitutional powers and the orders of/by the President/Governor be substituted in any manner under Article 142?

The exercise of constitutional powers and the orders of the President/Governor cannot be substituted in any manner under Article 142 nor does it allow for the concept of 'deemed assent' of Bills.

Is a law made by the State legislature a law in force without the assent of the Governor granted under Article 200 of the Constitution?

There is no question of a law made by a State legislature coming into force without assent of the Governor under Article 200.

In view of the proviso to Article 145(3), is it not mandatory for any Bench of the court to first decide whether a case involves substantial questions of law and has to be referred to a Bench of minimum five judges?

Returns unanswered. Irrelevant to this reference.

Do the powers of the Supreme Court under Article 142 of the Constitution limited to matters of procedural law?

Not possible to answer in a definitive manner. Scope of Article 142 answered as a part of earlier question.

Does the Constitution bar the Supreme Court from resolving Centre-States disputes except by way of a suit under Article 131?

Irrelevant to the functional nature of the reference. Hence, returned unanswered.

Rare reference under Article 143

Since Independence, the President has invoked Article 143 at least 14 times

ARTICLE 143: It empowers the President to seek the Supreme Court's opinion on questions of law or fact of public importance

PAST INSTANCES

Delhi Laws Act (1951): Laid down foundational principles on legislative delegation

Berubari Union (1960): Territorial cession to another country required a constitutional amendment under Article 368, not just a parliamentary law

Ramjanmabhoomi case (1993): The only reference declined by the Court. It refused to answer whether a temple existed beneath the Babri Masjid, citing judicial propriety and ongoing litigation —a rare assertion of the Court's discretionary boundary under Article 143.



A day after the Supreme Court pronounced its advisory opinion on a Presidential Reference, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin on Friday (November 21, 2025) said the “fight for State rights and true federalism will continue”. He asserted there was “no rest until amending the Constitution to fix timelines for Governors to clear Bills”. In a social media post, Mr. Stalin said the Supreme Court’s opinion in its answer to the Presidential Reference “will have no impact on the April 8, 2025 judgment in the case of State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu”.

Presidential reference response

Highlights of five-judge bench's opinion on queries sent by the President

'Timelines' ruling nullified

Five-judge Constitution bench nullifies two-judge bench decision that had imposed one-month deadline for governors to act on re-enacted bills, three-month timeline for President on reserved bills, and introduced "deemed assent" concept.

Separation of powers emphasised

Courts cannot impose time-bound mandates on governor's decision under Article 200 or President's assent under Article 201. Such action would violate separation of powers.

Limited judicial intervention allowed

But courts may issue limited direction requiring governor to exercise one of three constitutional options where there is prolonged, deliberate inaction.



'Deemed assent' unconstitutional

Constitution does not permit concept of automatic assent. Supreme Court cannot use Article 142 powers to declare deemed assent for bills.

Governor can exercise discretion

Governor not bound by aid and advice of council of ministers when deciding on bills. Constitution envisages governor as more than ceremonial figure modelled on British Crown. But **governor cannot withhold assent outright without returning bill to legislature for reconsideration (except money bills)**.



As trade row eases, U.S. clears missile sale to India

- This highlights a recent move by the U.S. to approve the possible sale of Javelin missiles and Excalibur projectiles to India, signaling a thaw in previously heightened trade tensions between the two countries.
- The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) notified Congress of this approval, with the total estimated cost of the deal at \$92.8 million.

Strategic and Security Rationale

- U.S. press releases emphasize that this proposed sale will strengthen national security goals by supporting India, described as a “major defence partner” vital for policy stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia regions.
- The deal is part of a broader effort to bolster the U.S.-India strategic relationship and enhance India's military readiness to address regional threats.

Details of the Military Sale

- India has requested to buy up to 216 M982A1 Excalibur tactical projectiles, which will enhance India's long-range precision strike capability.
- The proposed sale includes 100 FGM-148 Javelin rounds, one Javelin FGM-148 missile, and 25 Javelin Lightweight Command Launch Units (LwCLU) or Javelin Block 1 Command Launch Units (CLU).
- The Excalibur deal amounts to \$47.1 million, while the Javelin deal is worth \$45.7 million, both supporting India's ability to meet present and future threats and increasing first-strike accuracy in the armed forces.

Ancillary Support and Technology Transfer

- The Excalibur deal includes additional supply elements: ancillary items, electronic fire control systems with Improved Platform Integration Kit (iPIK), primers, propellant charges, technical assistance, repair and return services, and more.
- There is mention of technical assistance and services for sustainability and smooth integration into Indian defense systems.

Economic and Trade Context

- The approval comes just days after India finalized a deal to allow U.S. liquid petroleum gas (LPG) imports, marking the first major energy trade breakthrough.
- Formal Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) negotiations have resumed, signaling further progress in overall U.S.-India trade relations, with the first tranche of the BTA expected to conclude soon.

Calls demanding accountability from Zelenskyy growing louder in Ukraine

- Mounting pressure is being placed on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to take stronger anti-corruption actions as a major graft scandal threatens his government's credibility during Russia's full-scale invasion.
- Recently, over \$100 million was discovered embezzled from the country's energy sector through kickbacks, prompting Zelenskyy to dismiss two top officials and impose sanctions on close associates.
- These measures have not quelled public and political dissatisfaction, with many Ukrainians demanding broader accountability, especially from Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, a long-standing and influential figure.
- Senior lawmakers and Western allies assert that high-level accountability is essential to regain trust and demonstrate Ukraine's commitment to anti-corruption, particularly given their support in Ukraine's war effort.
- Opposition and anti-corruption lawmakers warn that retaining controversial figures—especially Yermak, who is viewed by critics as untouchable—undermines reform and public trust.

Government and Parliamentary Response

- Zelenskyy's government argues that dismissals and sanctions are steps towards accountability, while critics call for more senior officials to be held to account.
- The Parliament's anti-corruption committee, led by Anastasia Radina, has called for further investigations and for people in top positions to be removed if implicated.
- Discussion is ongoing within Ukraine's parliamentary coalition about next steps, with some advocating continued reforms and the removal of any senior figures accused of wrongdoing.

International Dimensions and Leadership Dynamics

- This emphasizes that Western support for Ukraine is closely tied to the country's anti-corruption measures, making political integrity vital for continued aid and partnership.
- Yermak's key position as “President's gatekeeper” gives him great influence over foreign and domestic affairs, including managing relations with allies and controlling high-level government appointments.
- Allegations against Yermak are based largely on opposition accusations and media reports; although he has not been publicly asked to resign, and he denies wrongdoing, many believe his removal is necessary to restore trust.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

Q1. Ans b

To transform Tripura into a vibrant hub of cultural, spiritual and eco-tourism by connecting key heritage and nature sites across the state. The project forms part of the Prime Minister Modi's vision of transforming Northeast India into a vibrant global tourism hub. It is a 4-night, 5-day itinerary designed to showcase Tripura's rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and spiritual landmarks. It includes: Agartala – the state capital and gateway to Tripura; Neer Mahal – a stunning lake palace blending Hindu and Mughal architecture; Sepahijala – known for its wildlife sanctuary and botanical gardens; Udaipur – home to the revered Tripura Sundari Temple (Matabari); Chabimura – famous for its rock carvings on steep hill faces; Dumboor Lake – a picturesque spot with islands and boating options.

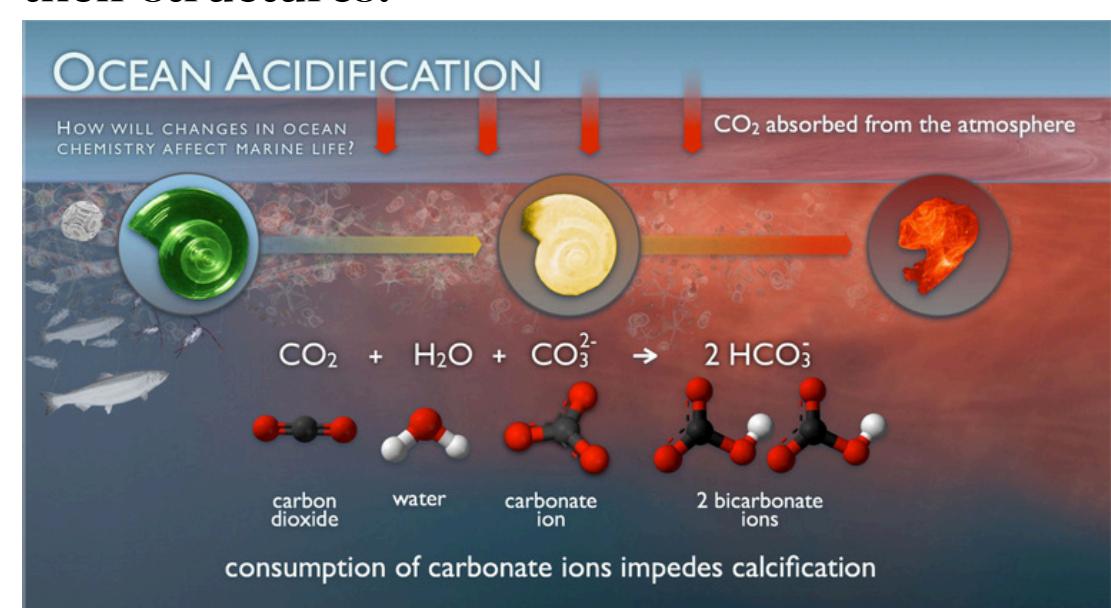


Q2. Ans c

Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in April during Baisakhi at the twin villages of Saloor-Dungra in Uttarakhand's Chamoli. It is a unique blend of ritual, theatre, music, and dance, deeply rooted in the local traditions of the Garhwal Himalayas. Community - It is dedicated to the custodial god, Bhumiyal Devta, a local divinity whose temple houses most of the festivities. The festival involves theatrical performances of the Ramayana and local legends, in which people sing songs and wear masks while dancing. There are 18 different types of masks made of Bhojpatra, Himalayan birch, that performers wear during the event, represent different deities and mythological figures.

Q3. Ans c

The primary cause of ocean acidification is carbon dioxide (CO₂). When increased amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere dissolve in seawater, it reacts with water to form carbonic acid, which lowers the ocean's pH, making it more acidic. Most of the increased CO₂ in the atmosphere is due to burning fossil fuels for energy production and transportation. Ocean acidification can negatively affect many marine organisms, particularly those with calcium carbonate shells or skeletons, as it can make it difficult for them to build and maintain their structures.



Q4. Ans b

Eravikulam National Park is the only national park that primarily protects the endangered Nilgiri tahr. It is home to the largest population of Nilgiri tahrs in the world. The park was established to protect the indigenous population of the Nilgiri tahr, which is an endangered mountain goat species. It is located in the Western Ghats of Kerala and is a critical stronghold for the species' conservation. The park was declared a sanctuary in 1975 and upgraded to a National Park in 1978, specifically with the objective of protecting the Nilgiri tahr population.



Case Study:



"Gen Franco died 50 years ago, but the dictator is still winning new fans in Spain"

There is a resurgence of interest in Franco's regime among young Spanish conservatives, with almost 20% of Spain's youth expressing a positive view of his dictatorship, as per a recent national survey. Franco's rule, described as a four-decade-long dictatorship, was marked by suppression of free speech, imprisonment of dissidents, and repression of cultural and linguistic minorities. The Spanish left, represented by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's government, is actively countering the growing pro-Franco sentiment through initiatives like the "Spain in Freedom" campaign, meant to promote democratic values and educate the youth. Some young right-wing voters are attracted to Franco's image due to dissatisfaction with current politics, embracing anti-establishment views or feeling that liberal values are being imposed. Supporters often cite tangible achievements from Franco's era (roads, housing, family values, public works), often relayed through family narratives that claim everyone "lived better under Franco". Growing nostalgia for Franco is viewed with concern among liberals and pro-democracy advocates, as it signals a possible trend toward greater acceptance of authoritarianism, not only in Spain but also as part of a broader global pattern.



Indian holy river Yamuna froths in toxic foam once again barely three weeks after Chhath Puja. The river's lean flow during winter time reduces the natural dilution of pollutants, allowing them to concentrate. The main contributors to foaming are phosphates and ammonia from detergents used in domestic and industrial activities. These chemicals lead to surfactant buildup in the water. A polyoxypropylene-based defoamer, approved by the US FDA, is used to suppress foam effectively without harming water quality. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and other stakeholders oversee the process to ensure eco-friendly application methods.



Curaçao has made global football history after becoming the smallest nation by population to qualify for a World Cup. The team sealed its place with a 0-0 draw against Jamaica on Tuesday, completing the qualifiers undefeated and finishing top of Group B with 12 points. The achievement marks Curaçao's first ever appearance at the tournament and places it ahead of Iceland, which previously held the record with a population of just over 350000 when it reached the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Curaçao's population stood at 156115 as of last January, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics.