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Lok Sabha passes historic women's reservation Bill

Opposition wants Bill to be delinked from delimitation and a quota within quota for OBCs; Home Minister promises to rectify shortcomings

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Twenty-seven years after a Women's Reservation Bill was first introduced in Parliament, the Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed such a Bill with near unanimity, to amend the Constitution and provide one-third reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

The Bill will now be taken up by the Rajya Sabha for passage in the remaining two days of the Special Session of Parliament and might require approval from half of the States.

Calling it "historic legislation", Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked the members. "I thank MPs across party lines who voted in support of this Bill," he said in a post on X.

Only two nays

With 454 members of the Lok Sabha supporting the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Eighth) Bill 2023, the constitutional requirement of a "two-thirds majority of the members present and



Wait is over: MPs are jubilant after the passage of the women's reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. PTI

voting" was easily met. Only two members, the All India Majlis-E-Itehadul Muslimeen's Asaduddin Owaisi and Syed Imtiyaz Jaleel, opposed the Bill.

The eight-hour debate saw MPs from the Treasury and Opposition benches, led by the Congress, engage in a battle over who should get credit for the landmark Bill, as well as over the contentious issue of a separate quota for women from Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

Home Minister Amit Shah assured the House that the government would rectify any shortcomings in the future. "You support

the Bill and reservation will be guaranteed," Mr. Shah told Opposition members.

The Congress made a U-turn from its own 2010 position, with its leader Sonia Gandhi, who was the first speaker in the debate, leading the demand for a separate quota within quota for OBCs after conducting a caste census.

She said there was no need to delay implementation of the Bill by linking it to a delimitation exercise that is frozen till 2026.

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TELLING NUMBERS

Highest percentage of women in parliaments of democracies

Currently — without reservation — 14.4% of Lok Sabha MPs are women. Here's how this number compares with the lower (or single) House of democracies on the top 10 of the women's representation list. Only major countries — and prominent democracies — have been listed.

Countries	Seats	Women	Percentage
India	543	78	14.4
Mexico	500	250	50.0
New Zealand	120	60	50.0
Sweden	349	162	46.4
Norway	169	78	46.2
Finland	200	92	46.0
South Africa	398	181	45.5
Argentina	257	115	44.8
Spain	350	155	44.3
Denmark	179	78	43.6
Belgium	150	64	42.7

Other prominent countries on the list: Australia (38.4%); France (37.8%); Germany (35.1%); United Kingdom (34.6%); Canada (30.7%); United States (28.8%); Pakistan (20.5%); Brazil (17.5%); Japan (10.3%)

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); latest available data

Category:

➤ **GS-2 (Polity)**

In the news:

- 128th Constitutional Amendment Bill 2023 introduced in Lok Sabha on Tuesday and passed on Wednesday.
- The bill seeks to provide 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and all State assemblies.

Few provisions of the bill:

- The bill seeks to provide 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and all State assemblies.
- The bill proposes to extend the quota to seats reserved for SCs/STs (by introducing article 330A).
- The bill mandates reservation for 15 years from the commencement of the Act which can be extended by law.
- The seats to be reserved will be allocated on a rotation basis. This will be determined by Parliament by law after subsequent delimitation.
- Articles proposed to be amended are: 239AA, 330A, 332A, 334A.

Additional information:

- After the amendment, the strength of women MPs in Lok Sabha will become 181 if calculated on today's total strength.
- The current house has only 82 women MPs (14.4%).
- Article 15(3) empowers parliament to make special provisions for women.

Additional read:

- Need for reservation of seats for women (under representation, global standards, bridging the gender gap etc.)

Study throws light on how gravitational instabilities affect evolution of galaxies

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) could help understand how gravitational instabilities are connected to galaxy evolution.

K. Aditya, a post-doctoral fellow at the IIA, tried to explore how gravitational instabilities are connected with star formation, gas fraction, timescale for growth of gravitational instabilities and finally, the observed morphology.

"They then compared the star formation rate, gas fraction, and timescale for the growth of gravitational instabilities of nearby galaxies and investigated the stability levels of a sample of 175 galaxies taken from



Star trek: The researchers investigated the stability levels of a sample of 175 galaxies taken from the SPARC database. A photo of the morphological classification of galaxies. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the Spitzer Photometry and Accurate Rotation Curves (SPARC) database. This helped them trace the role of dark matter in regulating the stability levels of the galaxies and understand if stars and gas can self-regulate the stability levels," the Department of Science and Technology (DST) said.

The DST added that

they found that spiral galaxies like the Milky Way exhibit a higher median star formation rate, lower stability, lower gas fraction, and a smaller timescale for the growth of gravitational instabilities.

"This indicates that gravitational instabilities in spirals rapidly convert a substantial amount of gas into stars, depleting the

gas reservoirs," the DST said.

It added that the study, which compared the stability levels in the nearby galaxies with those observed at high redshift, which are precursors to the galaxies in the local universe, could help understand how gravitational instabilities are connected to galaxy evolution.

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-3 (Science & Tech)

Context:

- A study was conducted by Indian Institute of Astrophysics on gravitational instability and its connection to star formation, gas fraction, galaxy evolution.

Key findings from the study:

- The study compared star formation rate, gas fraction and timescale for the growth of gravitational instabilities of nearby galaxies.
- Also investigated stability levels of a sample of 175 galaxies.
- Data was taken from Spitzer Photometry and Accurate Rotation Curves.
- This helped study the role of dark matter in regulating stability levels of the galaxies.
- Study found that spiral galaxies (eg: Milky way) exhibit a higher median star formation rate and lower stability, also smaller timescale for the growth of gravitational instabilities.
- Spiral galaxies thus rapidly convert a substantial amount of gas into stars, depleting the gas reservoir.

THE 42ND AMENDMENT THAT PUT 'SOCIALIST', 'SECULAR' IN PREAMBLE

RISHIKA SINGH

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

AFTER CONGRESS leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury claimed the words 'socialist' and 'secular' were missing in the Preamble of the Constitution, the copies of which were given to MPs Tuesday, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said, "It was like this when the Constitution was adopted. After that, the 42nd amendment came... So it must be the original copy."

A bulletin by Lok Sabha Secretariat on September 18 had said "a...calligraphed copy of the original Constitution of India" would be presented to MPs to mark the first sitting of Parliament in its new building.

Preamble and Amendment

The Preamble was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on January 22, 1947. It serves as an introduction to the Constitution, and articulates its philosophy, basic principles, and goals. The Preamble in 1950 read: "We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign democratic republic and to...". The words 'socialist' and 'secular' were added by The Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976, during the Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

'Socialist' and 'secular'

Indira sought to cement her approval among the masses with slogans such as "garibi hatao", and the word 'socialist' was inserted in the Preamble to underline that socialism was a goal and philosophy of the Indian state. However, Indira clarified that "we have our own brand of socialism", which was not the same as that of the USSR or China of the time.

Secularism in the Constitution means that the state protects all religions equally, maintains neutrality and impartiality towards all religions, and does not uphold any one religion as a "state religion".

Making secularism explicit

Secularism was a part of the philosophy of the Constitution even before 1976. The 42nd Amendment only formally inserted the word **into** the Constitution and made explicit what was already implicit in its various provisions.

Earlier discussions

In 2020 BJP MP Rakesh Sinha moved a resolution in Rajya Sabha seeking to remove the word socialist from the Preamble, saying, "You cannot tie a generation to a particular way of thinking."

In 2008, when a plea for the removal of 'socialist' came before the SC, the Bench said: "Why do you take socialism in a narrow sense defined by Communists? In a broader sense, it means welfare measures for the citizens."

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-2 (Polity)

Context:

- LoP in the Lok Sabha claimed that the words "socialist" and "secular" were missing in the Preamble of the Constitution provided to the MPs on Tuesday.

Facts in the news:

- Preamble was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on Jan 22nd 1947.
- The original preamble read: "We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign democratic republic and to...".
- "Socialist" and "Secular" were added by the 42nd amendment in 1976.
- Another word "integrity" was also added to the Preamble by the same amendment.

Additional reads:

- Indian ideas of socialism and secularism

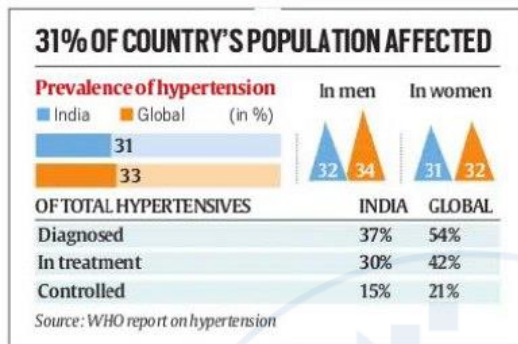


WHO red flag: Only 37% Indians with high BP diagnosed, 30% get treatment

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

ANURADHA
MASCARENHAS
& ANONNA DUTT
PUNE, NEW DELHI,
SEPTEMBER 19

AT LEAST 4.6 million deaths in India can be prevented by 2040 if half of its hypertensive population controls its blood pressure, according to the first-ever report released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the global impact of hypertension. It



estimates that 31 per cent of India's population or 188.3 mil-

lion people are living with the condition currently.

Considering high BP (140/90 mmHg or higher) leads to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems, and is preventable, the WHO has flagged the problem areas: only 37 per cent of Indians with hypertension are diagnosed and only 30 per cent access treatment.

Currently, only 15 per cent of those with hypertension in the country have it under control, the report says, adding that 52 per cent of all cardiovascular disease-related deaths, including heart attack, is because of high blood pressure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Context:

- WHO released a report on the global impact of hypertension.

About IHCI:

- Launched in 2017, Health Ministry, Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO-India began a five-year initiative to monitor and treat hypertension.
- India has committed to a "25 by 25" goal.
- The goal aims to reduce premature mortality due to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025.
- IHCI in 2022 awarded the UN Interagency Task Force and WHO special programme on primary health care award.

Similar topics covered on April 4th, May 18th and July 14th.

Thursday, September 21, 2023

Facts from the report:

- The report says 31% of India's population are currently living with conditions of hypertension.
- Only 37% Indians get diagnosed with hypertension.
- 30% access treatment.
- Around 52% of cardiovascular diseases related deaths is because of high BP.
- Primary triggers for hypertension in India:
 - High intake of salt
 - Consumption of tobacco (28%) and alcohol
 - Lack of physical exercise (34%)
 - Obesity
- India aims to provide standard care to 75 million patients with hypertension or diabetes.
- Indian government policy on hypertension: Indian Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI).

What is hypertension:

- Hypertension is defined as having systolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 140 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 90 mmHg.

Oldest yet fossils of a plant-eating dinosaur found in Rajasthan

IT Roorkee scientists have characterised dinosaur fossils from the middle-Jurassic period, found in the Thar desert near the Jaisalmer Basin by the Geological Survey of India. The remains are those of a sauropod dinosaur, and happen to be the oldest known fossils of this particular sauropod

Rohini Subrahmanyam

In a paper published recently in *Scientific Reports*, scientists from IIT Roorkee have characterised dinosaur fossils from the Middle Jurassic period, found in the Thar desert near the Jaisalmer Basin by the Geological Survey of India. They discovered that they had uncovered remains of a sauropod dinosaur, which is the same clade as the long-necked herbivores in *Jurassic Park* - only these happened to be the oldest known fossils of this particular kind of sauropod.

Belonging to the family *Dicraeosauridae* and from the superfamily *Diplodocoidea*, these fossils are the first dicraeosaurid sauropods to have been found in India. And at 167 million years old, they are the oldest known diplodocoid fossils in the world. The scientists named the dinosaur *Tharosaurus indicus*, with *Tharo* deriving from the Thar desert; *saurus* from the Greek 'sauros', or lizard; and *indicus* from its Indian origin. The fossils were found by Triparna Ghosh, Pragna Pandey, and Krishna Kumar from the Geological Survey of India.

167 million years old

"The most fascinating feature about sauropods is their size," said Debajit Datta, a postdoctoral researcher in Sunil Bajpai's group at IIT Roorkee and one of the lead authors of the paper. "They can grow more than a hundred feet. There are many sauropod groups that are even longer than the blue whale."

However, members of the *Dicraeosauridae* family of sauropods - to which *Tharosaurus* belongs - were not nearly as large. This family was unique; its members were smaller and had shorter necks and tails compared to the other long-necked sauropods.

Sauropods first appeared on the earth during the Jurassic period, about 200 million years ago. They were one of the most dominant clades of dinosaurs, surviving until the late Cretaceous period 65 million years ago, when dinosaurs went extinct.

'Something of an enigma'

But strangely, in India, while sauropod fossils from the Early Jurassic and the late Cretaceous period have been found, very few have from the Middle or Late Jurassic period, which would be about 160-180 million years ago.

"The Middle Jurassic remains somewhat of an enigma," said Advait Pokari, a palaeontologist at the University of Arizona. "Part of the reason is that we don't have as many exposed rocks from this time period. We also have not put in a lot of effort into exploring these rocks in places where they are exposed, like in India."

India has also been home to a few early, more primitive sauropods, like *Barapasaurus* and *Kotasaurus*. They were both discovered in the Kota Formation, a geological rock unit in Telangana, from the Early Jurassic period. "We have extremely primitive sauropods, and now we have a dicraeosaurid, which is more evolved," Dr. Datta said. "When we see this in conjunction with the arrangement of the continents in the Middle Jurassic, things start to get interesting."



Fossils associated with the backbone of *Tharosaurus indicus*, PRAGNA PANDEY

Importance of Indian landmass

Some 167 million years ago when *Tharosaurus* lived, India was not where it is now; it was part of a group of continents in the southern hemisphere with Africa, South America, Madagascar, and Antarctica, together called Gondwanaland. "Considering the fact that we already have more primitive sauropods in India and now the oldest diplodocoid, it is highly likely that India was the site of radiation of these diplodocoid dinosaurs to other parts of the world," Dr. Datta said.

The scientists reasoned that these diplodocoid sauropods could have originated in India during the Middle Jurassic period and used the land connections at the time to migrate to Madagascar, Africa, and South America. After that they could have made their way to North America and the rest of the world.

Another piece of evidence that supports their theory was that diplodocoid fossils in other continents like Africa, the Americas, and Asia come from a younger geological interval. This increases the possibility that the Indian landmass was the site for the *Tharosaurus* early radiation.

That along with the fact that archaic sauropod fossils from during the start of the Jurassic period - like of *Kotasaurus* and *Barapasaurus* - were also found in India suggests that this diplodocoid group of sauropods could have evolved and originated in India.

"This discovery of a new dinosaur from the Middle Jurassic in Rajasthan should not be seen in isolation; it must be looked at in conjunction with previously discovered dinosaurs in India," Dr. Bajpai said. "Together, the record from India

suggests that the Indian landmass was one of the most important places for the early evolutionary history of sauropod dinosaurs."

More fossils needed

Dr. Bajpai cautioned, however, that this was only the beginning. They didn't find the whole skeleton but parts of the backbone of the dinosaur. "A lot more needs to be discovered. Our science is such that with each new discovery, ideas change, and sometimes even identifications change."

"In the Middle Jurassic, when *Tharosaurus* lived, the continents were beginning to split apart from the supercontinent Pangea, and as these dinosaurs spread, they evolved into new forms," said Dr. Jukar. "A caveat here is that the fossil record of Middle Jurassic diplodocoids is comparatively poor, and that will heavily influence how we view their evolution and spread. For example, if we find one that's even older than *Tharosaurus* in, say, Russia, we'll have to re-evaluate our geographic hypotheses."

Dr. Jukar is impressed with the finding, but like Dr. Bajpai, believes that more fossils need to be found. More fossils of different parts of the *Tharosaurus* skeleton or of other related skeletons will help us better understand endemic sauropod evolution in India and global sauropod evolution and biogeography. "I think *Tharosaurus* is a remarkable find, but it is very fragmentary," according to Dr. Jukar. "It's only once we have a better fossil record, not only geographically, but also in terms of fossil completeness, that we can start to get a clear picture of what sauropod evolution was doing during this crucial time in earth history."



Sauropods first appeared on the earth during the Jurassic period, about 200 million years ago. They were one of the most dominant clades of dinosaurs, surviving until the late Cretaceous period

In 2006, an Indo-German team found another middle Jurassic sauropod dinosaur fossil in the Kutch basin of Gujarat, named *Camarasaurus supremus*, which was also the oldest fossil of that group found at the time. There have been subsequent finds of extremely old sauropod fossils in the region by the same team since.

'Extremely rare'

Dr. Bajpai said that more work and more expeditions will need to be undertaken in the Jaisalmer area. "This is a potentially important area for the Middle Jurassic dinosaurs in India."

"Indian dinosaurs are extremely rare," said Dr. Jukar. "It's not because they didn't exist; it's because we haven't had the same level of palaeontological interest and investment that we've seen in other countries like the U.S., Canada, or China." Dr. Bajpai echoed this sentiment, emphasising the need for more attention on palaeontological discoveries, specifically given the lack of natural history museums. "We definitely need more not only but many natural history museums... given the vast fossil wealth of our country."

(Rohini Subrahmanyam is a freelance journalist)

Category:

➤ Prelims

Context:

- Oldest known fossil of sauropod characterised from the Middle Jurassic period was found in Thar desert near the Jaisalmer Basin.

Facts in the news:

- The fossil belongs to the family Dicraeosauridae and the superfamily Diplodocoidea.
- These fossils are the first of dicraeosaurid sauropod to be found in India and also oldest in the world found yet (167 million years old).
- It has been named *Tharosaurus indicus*.
- This family of sauropods was unique: members were smaller, shorter neck and tail.
- Sauropods first appeared during the Jurassic period (about 200 mya) and survived until the late Cretaceous period (about 65 mya).
- Other sauropods found in India are: *Kotasaurus* and *Barapasaurus*.
- *Tharosaurus* found lived when India was a part of Gondwanaland.

Additional reads:

- Geological time scale
- Continental drift theory

'Food animal' tag for Northeast's mithun a leg-up for its meat

SUKRITA BARUAH

GUWAHATI, SEPTEMBER 20

ABHIJIT MITRA recalls an apocryphal tale from the time he was posted in Nagaland as Director of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's main research centre on mithuns, a bovine that is indigenous to some of the states in the Northeast.

The story went that during Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Arunachal Pradesh (then North East Frontier Agency), he was greeted by a tribal chief with a proposition: he offered to give the primeminister 500 mithuns in exchange for a young Indira Gandhi's hand in marriage with his son.

"True or not, the story shows how significant mithuns are to this society. The tribal chief offered 500 mithuns. Something only an incredibly powerful man could have offered," says Mitra, former director of the National Research Centre on Mithun and currently Animal Husbandry Commissioner with the Union government.

The mithun — steeped in cultural and ritual significance, and



Traditionally, the mithun is semi-domesticated and is reared in a free-range forest ecosystem. ICAR

consumed for generations across many regions of the Northeast — could be poised for another role in society. With the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recognising the bovine as a 'food animal', starting September 1, work is on to help farmers and tribal village communities benefit commercially from the sale and processing of mithun meat. The mithun, which goes by its scientific name *Bos frontalis*, is a ruminant species of the Bovidae family found in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.

The slaughter of mithuns — an animal that has ritual significance and is also the state animal of both Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland — is traditionally reserved for special occasions, which has in present times come to also include feasts given by election candidates.

At Teneng village in Nagaland's Peren district, Kewiribam's family has been rearing mithuns for generations, but like many other such farmers, has never sold mithun meat in the market. Last week, however, he was among several mithun farmers from his village

who travelled to the town of Medziphema to attend an orientation and five-day training programme at the ICAR-National Research Centre on Mithun on farming the animal and processing its meat.

On an average, an adult mithun weighs between 400 and 650 kg. Kewiribam says a mithun that is 4-5 years of age can be sold for Rs 2 lakh or more, and when sold as meat, can fetch Rs 300 per kg. However, until now, mithuns and their meat were sold only for very special occasions such as festivals or weddings, he says, and that too never outside the radius of a few neighbouring villages.

Kewiribam says that after receiving training from the ICAR centre, farmers have begun adopting practices to better protect the mithun, including by fencing off mithun enclosures, creating night shelters and vaccinating the animals. "Now, we are excited about the possibilities," he says.

Mitra, the former director of the National Research Centre on Mithun, is fascinated by the bovine. "It is the most dress sensitive animal I have ever seen.

They all wear impeccable black coats and white socks," he jokes.

Traditionally, the mithun is semi-domesticated and is reared in a free-range forest ecosystem. The animal is usually let loose in a community forest and has rarely required shelter or supplementary feeding, except for salt. Since the soil in these parts is acidic and low in salt content, mithuns have an affinity for salt and are known to lick it off the hands of the farmers.

"It has a lot of traditional economic value. Here is an animal that grows from 25 kg to 450 kg without competing for any food from the human basket and with no input. Except salt, it needs nothing else. I realised that a lot of business potential and the potential to provide nutritional, livelihood and financial security," he says.

Bhanu Pratap Singh, founder of the Guwahati-based start-up North East Farm Sales Promotion, is among those working to market mithun products outside regions where it is traditionally consumed, and to promote it as "premium meat" by underlining its low fat content of 2-4%. "We

have come out with six different products including vacuum-packed dry meat, pickle, ready-to-drink soup, ready-to-fry wafers and instant biryani. Now, with FSSAI approval, these can enter the mainstream food market. In the future, we want to promote it as premium meat in the Gulf and Europe, as an alternative to the buffalo meat that India exports," he says.

As of 2019, there are around 3.9 lakh mithuns in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, and its conservation is an area of concern. However, Dr Girish Patil, the current director of ICAR's Mithun centre, does not see efforts to promote the commercial sale of Mithun meat as being at odds with conservation.

"As demand for mithun products increases, there is likely to be a greater focus on the propagation and sustainable management of mithun herds... The animal also holds cultural and traditional value for many communities in the region for years. The economic incentive to continue raising the mithun could actually help preserve these practices," he says.

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-3 (Animal Husbandry, Food Processing)

In the news:

- FSSAI has recognised the bovine as a food animal starting September 1st.
- This will help farmers and tribal village communities to now commercially sell and process the mithun meat.
- Earlier mithun meat was sold only for special occasions and that too in limited geography.
- In future, it can provide an alternative to buffalo meat which India exports.

Additional read:

- National Research Centre on Mithun

Food animal tag:

- Food animals are those that are raised and used for food production or consumption by humans.
- The tag is issued by FSSAI in India.

Facts about Mithun:

- Scientific name: *Bos frontalis* which is a ruminant species of the Bovidae family.
- In India, found in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.
- Has cultural and ritual significance in many regions of India's NE.
- It is the state animal of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.
- Mithuns have an affinity for salt.
- Also referred to as the 'ship of the highland' and the 'cattle of the mountains'.
- Mithun is a descendant of the Indian Bison.

AFTER TRUDEAU VISIT

India, Canada hit pause on FTA talks amid strain in ties

CEPA talks will resume after political issues are sorted out: Official in Delhi

ANANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 15

DAYS AFTER Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over "anti-India activities of extremist elements" in Canada, at his meeting with Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau on the sidelines of the G20 Summit, the two countries are learnt to have "paused" their negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement.

Confirming this, a senior government official said on Friday that India-Canada talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) are expected to resume after the resolution of the issues between the two countries.

"There were certain political developments in Canada on which India has also raised its objection... for the time being (till) these political developments are settled, we have paused the negotiations with Canada. But the moment these political issues are sorted out, the talks will resume. It is only a pause. There is no break, there is only pause," said the official.

Ties between the two coun-

EXPLAINED

Bilateral trade ties

IN 2022, India was Canada's 10th largest trading partner. India's total exports to Canada added up to US\$ 4.10 billion in 2022-23, up from US\$ 3.76 billion in 2021-22. India's imports from Canada added up to US\$ 4.05 billion in 2022-23, up from US\$ 3.13 billion in 2021-22.

tries have been strained over the activities of pro-Khalistan groups in Canada. In July, India had summoned the Canadian envoy and issued a demarche, days after posters naming senior Indian diplomats posted in Canada came up in some areas there.

Before the start of the G20 Summit, sections of the Canadian media had reported that Ottawa had sought a pause in the trade negotiations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Category:

- GS-2 (IR)
- GS-3 (Economy)

Context:

- A pause is learnt to have come in negotiations on a bilateral FTA between Canada and India following the anti-India activities of extremist elements (pro-Khalistan group).

Data in the news:

- In 2022, Canada's 10th largest trading partner: India.
- Since 2018: India is the largest source of international students in Canada.
- India's exports to Canada in 2022-23: around USD 4.10 billion (This was USD 3.76 billion in 2021-22).
- Cumulative FDI from Canada since 2000 is USD 4.07 billion.
- Major items of exports to Canada: gems, jewellery, precious stones, pharmaceutical products, ready-made garments, mechanical appliances, iron and steel articles.
- What India imports: pulses, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, iron scrap, copper, minerals and industrial chemicals.

Additional read:

- India-Canada bilateral economic cooperation.

Use case:

- India-Canada relations.

Centre clears proposal to buy 12 Su-30 MKI fighter jets

DAC okays proposals for 9 platforms, weapon systems worth Rs 45,000 cr

AMRITANAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 15

THE DEFENCE Acquisition Council (DAC) Friday cleared proposals worth Rs 45,000 crore to acquire 12 Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft and indigenous Dhruvastra short range air-to-surface missile for the Indian Air Force among nine platforms and weapon systems for the armed forces.

A statement released by the defence ministry said that the DAC has granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) to procure 12 Su-30 MKI aircraft with associated equipment from the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

The DAC, which is headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, is among the top bodies for clearing major capital acquisitions for defence. AoN is the first step in the long defence procurement process. Grant of an AoN does not necessarily lead to a final order.

A Russian-origin fighter jet, the Su-30 MKI jets have had a good flight safety record. The IAF had inducted 272 of these jets since 1998. Around 10 Su-30s have crashed since 2010.

Officials told The Indian Express that once procured and inducted, the IAF's Su-30 fleet will be back to the planned levels by replacing the aircraft lost over the years in training.

The DAC also accorded AoN for the procurement of Dhruvastra short range air-to-surface missile, which is to be fired from the HAL-made Advanced Light Helicopters Mk-IV.

The precision-guided missiles were designed by the Defence Research Development Organisation.

The DAC also cleared proposals for avionics upgradation of the Dornier aircraft, which would improve the accuracy of operations for IAF.

The DAC accorded the AoN for procurement of Light



The Su-30 MKI aircraft will be procured from HAL. File

Armoured Multipurpose Vehicles (LAMV) and Integrated Surveillance and Targeting System (ISAT-S) aimed at enhancing protection, mobility, attack capability and increased survivability of the Army's mechanised forces.

Proposals for procurement of High Mobility Vehicle (HMV) Gun Towing Vehicles for swift mobilisation and deployment of artillery guns and radars for the Army and Next Generation Survey Vessels to enhance the Navy's capabilities in performing hydrographic operations were also cleared by the DAC.

According to the defence ministry, all these procurements will be made from Indian vendors under relevant categories of the Defence Acquisition Procedure, which governs all capital acquisitions of the ministry.

During the meeting, the Defence Minister stated that it is time to upgrade the ambitions towards indigenisation.

Singh said instead of a threshold of 50% indigenous content for indigenously designed, developed and manufactured projects, the aim should be a minimum 60-65% indigenous content.

He asked the Chief of Defence Staff, Service Chiefs, Defence Secretary and DG (Acquisition) to work towards increasing the minimum indigenous content threshold in consultation with the Indian Industry.

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-3 (Defence)

Context:

- DAC Friday approved a proposal to acquire 12 Su-30 MKI aircrafts and Dhruvastra missiles for the IAF.

About Su-30 MKI fighter aircrafts:

- These are twin seater, multi-role, long range air superiority aircraft.
- Developed by Russia's Sukhoi Aviation Centre and built in India by HAL for the IAF.
- Range: 3000 km and mach speed: Mach 2.
- Algeria, China, Vietnam, Venezuela and Malaysia also uses Su-30 aircrafts along with India and Russia.

About Dhruvastra:

- Indigenously made short range air-to-surface missile.
- These are to be fired from Advanced Light Helicopters Mk-IV.
- Dhruvastra is the helicopter-launched version of third-generation anti-tank guided missiles (the Nag missile system).
- The missile system has all-weather day-and-night capability and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour and explosive reactive armour.

Additional read:

- Integrated Guided Missile Programme
- Helina

Suggested reads for the day:

- GS2: "Before quota, delimitation" in The Indian Express
- GS2: "27 years on, a step closer" in The Indian Express
- GS2: "Diaspora, distrust, distance" in The IE
- GS3: "Taking a giant leap for a new ethics in outer space" in TH
- GS2: "Vietnam, key piece of America's Indo-Pacific puzzle" in TH

Facts for prelims:

- Personalities in news: Periyar, Adi Shankaracharya
- Abraham Accords
- ASEAN Solidarity Exercise
 - First joint naval drill conducted by ASEAN near South China Sea.
- Place in news: Nagorno-Karabakh region
 - Context: Azerbaijan attacked Armenian positions in the region on Tuesday.