

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## CHANDIGARH ELECTION INCIDENT A MOCKERY OF DEMOCRACY, SAYS SC

**CONTEXT:** The Supreme Court gave the BJP victory at the Chandigarh mayoral elections a jolt, threatening to order fresh elections after a video played in the open courtroom on Monday showed the Returning Officer “obviously defacing” ballot papers, while taking stealthy glances at the camera overhead like a “fugitive”.



The Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a three-judge Bench, addressed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union Territory of Chandigarh, and senior advocate Maninder Singh, for the winning candidates. The Supreme Court directed the sequestration of the entire records of the mayoral election under the custody of the Registrar-General of the Punjab and Haryana High Court forthwith by 5 p.m.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

## WITH 47 VOTES, CHAMPAI GOVT. WINS THE FLOOR TEST

**CONTEXT:** The Champai Soren government won the trust vote on the floor of the Jharkhand Assembly on Monday after 47 Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led alliance legislators voted for the motion and 29 against it. Mr. Champai Soren moved the motion on which a debate was held.



During the voting, 27 MLAs of the JMM, 17 of the Congress and one each of the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation voted for the motion. The only nominated MLA, Glen Joseph Galstaun, who represents the Anglo-Indian community, also voted in favour of the motion, taking the total to 47.

Twenty-five MLAs of the BJP, three of the All-Jharkhand Students' Union (AJSU) and one of the Ajit Pawar faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) voted against the motion. Independent MLA Saryu Roy did not vote. Another Independent MLA Amit Yadav, Indrajit Mahto of the BJP and Ram Das Soren of the JMM were not present in the House.

Before the floor test, Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan addressed the 14th session of the fifth Jharkhand Legislative Assembly by reading out the achievements of the government.

The More You Learn, The More You Earn



www.vedhikiasacademy.org



CRACKING CIVIL SERVICES NO MORE A DIFFICULT TASK

COME JOIN WITH US



## POLITY &amp; GOVERNANCE

## CBSE URGES SCHOOLS TO PREPARE FOR NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK ROLL-OUT

**CONTEXT:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has urged principals of schools affiliated to the board to start contemplating the pattern for allocating credits to students for subjects, in line with the National Credit Framework (NCrF).

### Sample framework

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is set to notify a new set of credit framework for schools next year from Classes 9 to 12, and in anticipation of the notification, has asked its schools to start implementing a sample credit framework at least for Classes 9 and 11.

As per the existing regulations, a student has to clear five subjects (two languages and three main subjects — maths, science and social science) to pass the class. Nearly 1,050 hours are allotted to five compulsory subjects. In order to aid teachers to implement the credit framework, we have allotted an additional 150 hours for internal assessment of subjects like Physical Education and Health, Art Education, a skill-related subject, and a third language.

Currently, a Class 9 student passing with five compulsory subjects and completing internal assessment of remaining mentioned subjects will earn at least 40 credits. In case the student opts for a sixth or seventh subject, and passes the five compulsory subjects, extra credits totalling up to 54 can be earned.

### Ten subjects

The CBSE proposal says while this is applicable for the current academic session, when the new curriculum according to the National Curriculum Framework kicks in for 2024-2025, students in Classes 9 and 10 will have to study 10 subjects compulsorily.

Additional subjects include a compulsory third language, one subject in inter-disciplinary area, physical education and health, art education, and a skill-related subject. Of the three languages, two will have to be native to India. Under new NCF, importance is given to Physical Education and Art Education. Every child will learn three languages.

### Academic locker

All credits collected by students will be stored in their academic bank of credit in the students' DigiLockers. The Ministry of Education is also working on systems to reconcile credits in case the student goes abroad. The idea of introducing credits right from school-level is to also reconcile it with higher education systems (consisting of under-graduation, post-graduation, and diplomas) for assessment and equivalence purposes.

We are urging schools to internally start implementing the credit system according to the guidelines we are issuing so that they are better prepared to implement it officially after it is notified next year.



*"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." - Robert Frost*

## POLITY &amp; GOVERNANCE

## PLEA FOR ASI SURVEY OF ALL REMAINING CELLARS IN GYANVAPI MOSQUE

**CONTEXT:** Days after a district court allowed puja inside one of the cellars of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, a Hindu plaintiff on Monday moved a fresh application before the court, seeking that directions be given to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a thorough survey of the remaining cellars inside the disputed structure.

The petitioners, Rakhi Singh, who is plaintiff no. 1 in the pending Shringar Gauri worshipping suit of 2022 at a Varanasi court, maintained that the survey of the remaining cellars was necessary to ascertain the religious character of the property in question.

In her application filed under Section 75(e) and Order 26 Rule 10A r/w Section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure, Ms. Singh claimed that that within the Gyanvapi premises, cellar numbers N1 to N5 (in the north) and S1 to S3 (in the south) exist, and cellar numbers N1 and S1 are completely not accessed because their entrances are blocked.

### In the HC

Meanwhile, the Allahabad High Court on Tuesday will hear the amended application by the Anjum Intezamia Masjid Committee, which runs and manages the Gyanvapi mosque, challenging the district court's order of January 31 of allowing puja to be conducted inside the 'Vyas ka tehkhana'. The Varanasi district administration, within hours of the lower court's order, ensured its compliance, and puja is being performed inside the cellar since then.

## ART AND CULTURE

## INDIANS WIN BIG AT GRAMMYS: SHAKTI TAKES HOME HONOURS

**CONTEXT:** Indian music struck a chord at the 2024 Grammy Awards with five musicians from the country, including tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain and flautist, winning the coveted prize in Los Angeles.



While Mr. Hussain was India's big winner with three Grammys, Mr. Chaurasia picked up two awards. Singer Shankar Mahadevan, violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan and percussionist Selvaganesh Vinayakram, Mr. Hussain's collaborators in the fusion group Shakti, won one Grammy each at a glittering ceremony held on Sunday night.

Shakti won the 2024 Grammy Award for best global music album for *This Moment*. The album features the four Indians as well as its founding member, legendary British guitarist John McLaughlin. *This Moment*, which released to critical acclaim in June 2023, is the group's first studio album in more than 45 years.

Besides his award for Shakti, Mr. Hussain won two other awards — the best global music performance for Pashto and best contemporary instrumental album for *As We Speak*.

#### Praise from PM

The best global music performance category had eight nominees, including *Abundance In Millets*, a song by Falu and featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi, *Shadow Forces* by Arooj Aftab, Vijay Iyer, and Shahzad Ismaily, and *Alone* by Burna Boy.

Mr. Rakesh Chaurasia, nephew of legendary flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia, bagged two Grammys as part of the ensemble of American banjo player Béla Fleck and American bassist Edgar Meyer for Pashto and *As We Speak*.

The leader reiterated that India will begin withdrawing its troops operating three maritime reconnaissance aircraft from March 10 and complete the process within two months.

New Delhi considers the Indian Ocean archipelago to be within its sphere of influence. However, the Maldives has shifted into the orbit of China — its largest external creditor — with September's election of Mr. Muizzu, who demanded the Indian troops leave.

#### Charges against India

The Maldives accused India's coastguard last week of entering the north of its EEZ and intimidating three Maldivian fishing vessels. Mr. Muizzu rejected extension of a 2019 agreement to jointly carry out hydrographic surveying of the nation's 1,192 coral islands.

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## FIRST AMONG FIRSTS

**CONTEXT:** Sinn Fein's Michelle O'Neil was elected as the first nationalist First Minister of Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) still committed to the unification of the two Irelands emerged as a powerful political force in Northern Ireland (part of the U.K.) and the Republic of Ireland (an independent country and European Union member).

In the 2020 elections, the Sinn Fein won the largest share of votes. In 2022, it emerged as the largest party, with 29 % of the vote share, in elections in Northern Ireland, while the pro-U.K. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) finished second with a 21.3 % vote share.

According to the 1998 Good Friday agreement, which ended three decades of sectarian violence known as the Troubles, Northern Ireland's government should include representatives of the largest and second largest political blocs (unionists, who are largely Protestants, as well as republican nationalists, who are mostly Catholics). After the 2022 vote, Northern Ireland saw chaos with the DUP refusing to join hands with the Sinn Fein to form the government, citing its opposition to the Northern Ireland Protocol, which London had agreed on with Brussels to manage post-Brexit trade between the U.K. and the EU. The DUP alleged that the Protocol, which introduced checks on goods being transferred from Britain to the island of Ireland, weakened the union.

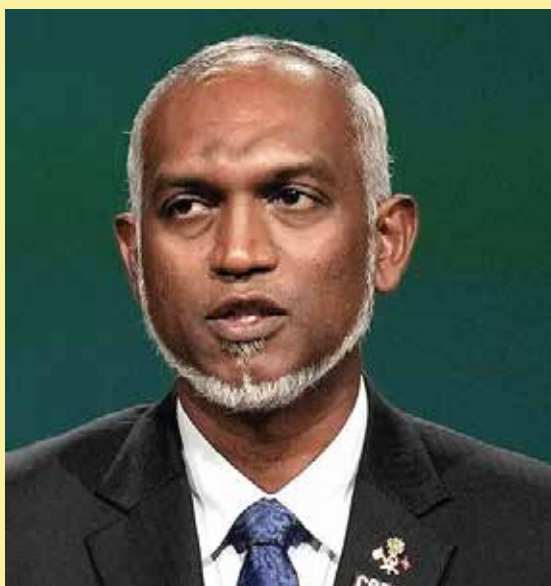
The pro-U.K. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) decided to return to the power-sharing agreement after London agreed to reduce customs checks on the Irish border and spend some £3 billion in Northern Ireland to steady the region's finances. Sinn Fein, which campaigned on bread-and-butter issues and promised to address immediate administrative challenges, is now formidable, and delaying the power-sharing agreement will not weaken the nationalists.

Majority of Northern Ireland's voters still prefer being a part of the U.K. Also, the posts of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (to be held by the DUP) are technically equal. However, the symbolic value of the Sinn Fein leading the government in Northern Ireland and being the largest bloc in the Republic of Ireland amid rising economic and political discontents in the island, especially after Brexit, cannot be

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## MALDIVES PRESIDENT MUIZZU VOWS TO BOOST DEFENCES AFTER TELLING INDIAN TROOPS TO LEAVE

**CONTEXT:** Mohamed Muizzu in his first address to Parliament vowed to turn the modest Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF) into a modern military capable of patrolling its seas, which straddle key global shipping lanes.



understated. After decades of the Troubles followed by political reconciliation, the nationalists are on the ascendant, while the unionists are on the back foot.

**POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

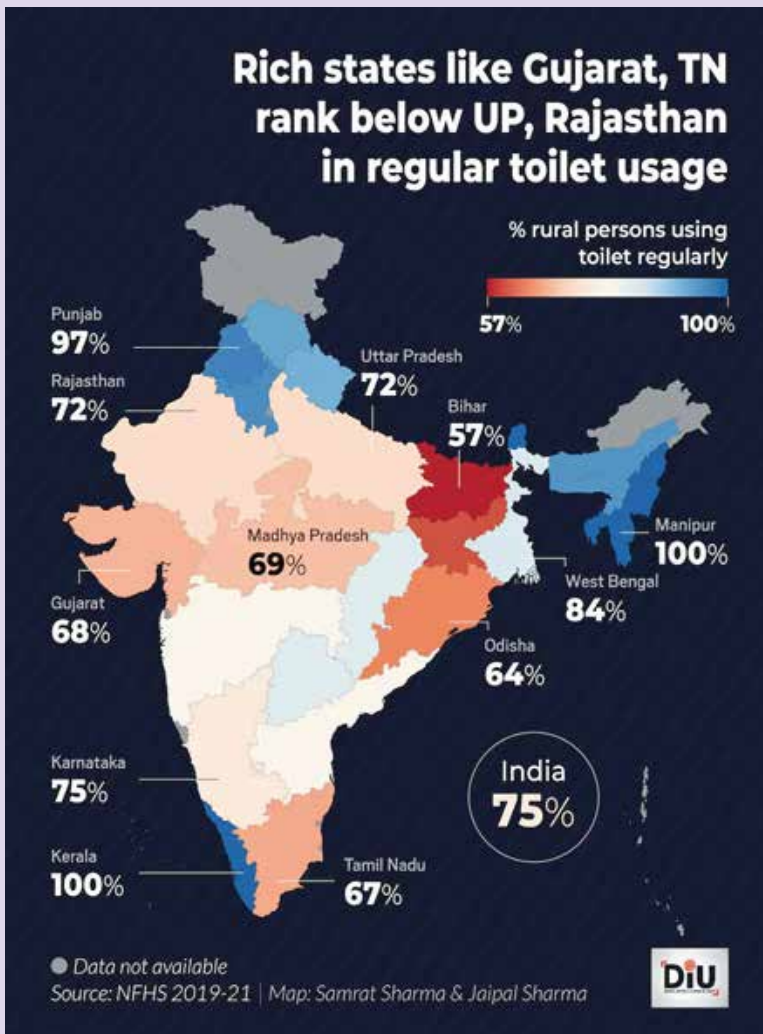
## A CRITICAL VIEW OF THE 'SANITATION MIRACLE' IN RURAL INDIA

**CONTEXT:** In the past decade, improving sanitation coverage has been one of the key public policy miracles in India. Access to water and sanitation is Goal 6 in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals envisaged by the United Nations.

### History of public sanitation in India

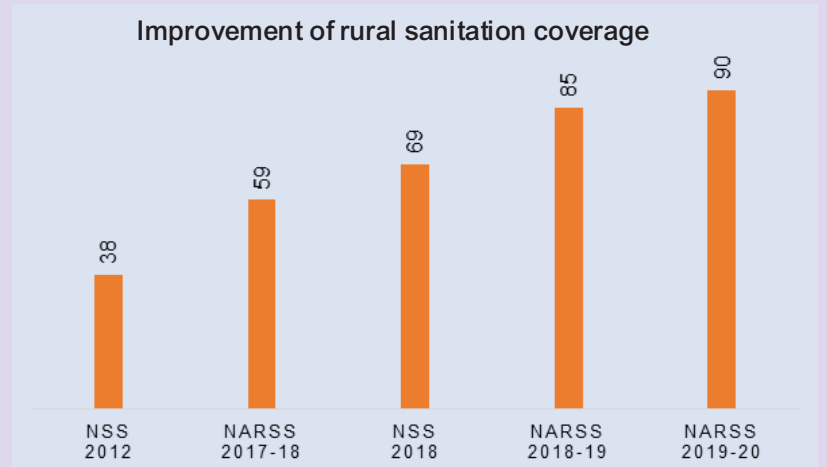
India launched of the highly subsidised Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) in 1986 to promote public sanitation. The Total Sanitation Campaign in 1999 marked a shift from a high subsidy regime to a low subsidy one and a demand-driven approach. The public sanitation programme evolved as a mission in 2014 under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) to make India Open Defecation Free (ODF) by October 2019.

### Data and behavioural patterns

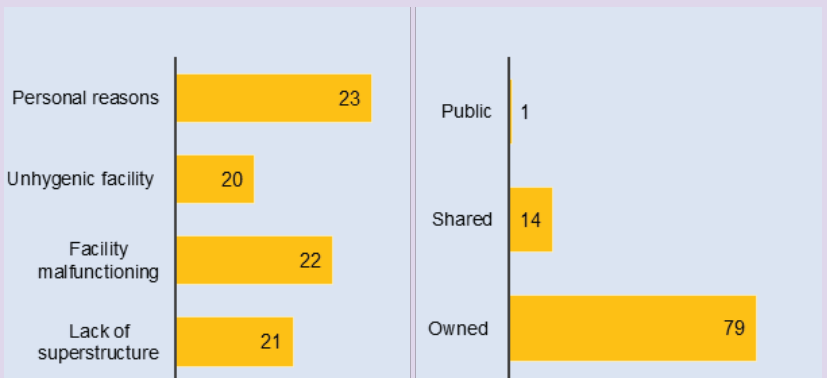


According to information by the Government of India, sanitation coverage in the country improved from 39 % in 2014

to 100 % in 2019. The government launched Phase II of the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) to focus here was on the sustainability of initial achievements by promoting solid and liquid waste management and covering those households left out earlier. The government aims to transform India from ODF to ODF Plus by 2024-25. Around 85 % of villages in India have become ODF Plus, according to government data. Nevertheless, this impressive performance also needs to be viewed from the perspective of behavioural change, which will usher in sustainability in a true sense.



**FIGURE:** Column chart representation of improvement of rural sanitation coverage. National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS), National Sample Survey (NSS).



**FIGURE:** (L) Bar chart representation in percentage points primary reasons for not using sanitation facility. (R) Bar chart representation in per centage points of nature of ownership of sanitation facilities.

A survey conducted by us in 2018, covering the best and worst covered districts and blocks of three States, showed that 59 % of households in Bihar, 66 % in Gujarat and 76 % in Telangana had toilet access. Among those having access, 38 % of households in Bihar, 50 % in Gujarat and 14 % in Telangana had at least one member who did not use it. A higher non-use of toilets in Gujarat was due to a lack of access to water in Dahod district, one of the two districts selected from the State.

These surveys throw up two major issues — the left-out households and toilets unused for defecation. The left-out households appear substantial and need to be covered in Phase II. On the other hand, the government should identify the shortcomings of the previous phase and cover the gaps in the present phase.

### Household size, social norms

Toilet use depends on household size, along with economic conditions and education. Higher the household size, the greater the chances of not using the toilet. Overcrowding and social norms prevent all household members from using the same toilet. As per survey, 2020, approximately, 3 % - 4 % of households have more than one toilet. Further, the chances of using a toilet are reduced if access to water is difficult. Toilet use is found to be very high in remote and backward villages if households have doorstep access to water. The chances of toilet use are also reduced if a household has a detached bathroom.

Approximately, 27 % of households in survey villages in Gujarat and 61% in West Bengal did not have their own toilets. Moreover, around 3 % of households did not use their own toilets in either State. One-fourth of non-user households in Gujarat did not cite any specific reason for not using it. Social norms of purity may have dissuaded them from using the toilet. Quality issues were also another major reason. In Gujarat, 17% of those not using toilets reported that the sub-structure had collapsed, and 50% reported that the pits were full. One-third of non-users in West Bengal reported that the superstructure had collapsed, and another one third reported the pit being full. Toilets not used for defecation are used as storerooms. If social norms prevent toilet use on the premises, the facility is used for bathing and washing clothes.

It was also reported that 96% of toilets were functional, and almost all had access to water. However, the same report suggests that only 85% of the rural population used safe, functional, and hygienic toilets. Assuming that the same percentage of people have toilet access as the households, the gap rises to 10% between access to toilets and their use.

Phase II of the programme does not have any criteria mandating multiple toilets for households larger than a certain size. Neither does it have any provision for building an attached bathroom. The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) programme was launched to provide tap water to each household by 2024. Nevertheless, no relation has been observed between per capita central expenses made on the JJM and the percentage of villages declared ODF Plus across States. Neither is there any relation between the percentage of ODF Plus villages in a State and households having tap connections.

Social norms that act through social networks play a significant role in toilet construction and use. Examining the networks through which others influence people for their sanitation behaviour, we observed that the size and characteristics of these networks can be different in various parts of the country. In one of the upper caste-dominated villages, lower castes were found to have high brokerage (ability to connect others) to make social norms acceptable and enforceable. Many networks pass through high brokerage nodes, making associated individuals highly connected. Hence, sanitation decisions are less likely to be taken independently. On the contrary, sanitation networks in upper caste villages are more cohesive, smaller and diverse.

Sanitation behaviour also varies across socio-economic classes. NARSS-3 finds that access to toilets was highest for upper castes (97 %) and lowest for Scheduled Castes (95 %). Our multi-State study finds that the percentage of non-users is higher among upper castes than backward

castes. Hence, sanitation behavioural change campaigns should consider two steps: construction and use. Further, the variation in networks between villages should be considered in campaign design as in some villages, behavioural change of households can happen independently, and collectively in others. Phase II of the SBM-G does not seem to have given enough thought to social engineering through the social networks in a society haunted by regressive norms and caste hierarchy.

### Lack of synergy

Around 10 Cr toilets were constructed between 2014 and 2019 during the initial phase of the SBM-G. However, collective behavioural change in the nation has still to take place. Our studies suggest that behavioural change in sanitation cannot happen independently. It is contingent upon social networks and an overall improvement of living standards, including better housing and access to basic services. There are separate programmes for each of these basic needs, but they are not well coordinated. The lack of overall planning in India has led to a lack of synergy of programmes despite high levels of expenditure in fulfilling basic needs. Uncoordinated efforts would lead to an inefficient utilisation of precious public finances.

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

### AN UTTAR PRADESH MODEL TO TACKLE MALNUTRITION

**CONTEXT:** Uttar Pradesh is a remarkable example of the importance of women's empowerment in tackling malnutrition by supporting community-based micro enterprises led by self-help groups. These enterprises produce fortified and nutritious foods for pregnant/breastfeeding mothers and children, provided as take-home ration through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme.

In 2020, the Department of Women and Child Development and the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission collaborated to set up a decentralised production of take-home rations of different variants for ICDS beneficiaries by women's enterprises. A 20-member women group uses automated equipment with a capacity of five metric tonnes per day. Once the rations are delivered to Anganwadi centres by the women's groups, the women are reimbursed according to ICDS cost norms. Two pilot plants were set up in Unnao and Fatehpur in 2021. The project expanded to 202 production units across 43 districts in just over two years creating livelihood opportunities for 4,080 women, reaching 12 million ICDS beneficiaries.

### Women's empowerment for nutrition

The unique gender-transformative approach provides livelihood opportunities to local women, empowering them economically. Under the de-centralised model, women from self-help groups are responsible for preparing specific caloric values ration and its supply. Over 4,000 women have organised themselves into 204 self-help group micro enterprises across 204 blocks in 43 districts. They have been provided with machinery and raw materials such as wheat at

subsidised rates to produce and distribute take home ration. This project presents an excellent opportunity for them to earn a livelihood and contribute to the local economy as several ingredients are procured locally. The aim is to generate an additional income of ₹8,000 a month for each woman.

The Department of Women and Child Development has also used the opportunity to re-formulate the take home ration — it is nutritious with the inclusion of high-quality milk powder, oil, vitamins and minerals, which can help to support the health and well-being of children and prevent malnutrition. Different formulations were designed for different groups to address the monotony issue, and the packaging was reworked to reflect a sense of quality and create demand in the community. National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories-accredited laboratories test the products before dispatch to Anganwadi centres to certify the requisite calorie and protein values and ensure food safety.

### Strengthening demand

The WFP has collaborated with the Department of Women and Child Development to enhance the nutritional value and utilisation of supplementary nutrition provided through the ICDS scheme in the State. The focus has been on making the take home ration products more nutritious and diverse to increase consumption. This has been achieved through a validated process that improvises existing products and develops new products under ICDS norms and global guidelines.

To ensure good uptake of the variety of products developed, there was research which included production trials, shelf-life analysis, and an acceptability study. The products include sweet and savoury options, such as aata besan halwa, aata besan barfi, daliya moong dal khichdi, and energy-dense halwa. Ready-to-eat meals come in age-appropriate colour-coded packaging that includes helpful information on infant and young child feeding practices. The packaging label also lists the ingredients, nutritional information, cooking instructions, directions for storage, food safety and hygiene messages, manufacturing dates, and batch numbers. All these aspects have been included in alignment with the regulations set by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

### Fostering innovation and sustainability

An app-based solution is being developed to build the capacities of women to produce take home rations. To improve the viability of the production units, women will receive training to develop nutritious products for the local market. They will use the same units they use to produce take home rations, which will enhance their income, improve the revenue of the take home ration units, and ensure the availability of nutritious food in local markets.

A pilot project is being implemented to strengthen the supply chain and track home rations using QR codes during delivery. The WFP supports this project and will enable government officials to track the Take home ration production, delivery status, and value chain.

The State-wide expansion of micro-enterprises led by women who produce take home rations for supplementary

nutrition confirms successful targeting and demonstrates how empowering women can bring about effective and sustainable processes that help improve long-term nutrition in a community. This also highlights the significance of a multi-stakeholder approach towards technically sound and comprehensive solutions that are scalable by leveraging the strengths of the community.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

# MYANMAR'S CIVIL WAR AND INDIA'S INTERESTS

**CONTEXT:** In February 2021, when the Myanmar military leaders ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, they anticipated a resistance movement that would subside in a few months. Three years later, the opposition to military rule gains in strength. Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) and the People's Defence Forces control many towns in different parts of the country. A few weeks ago, the Arakan Army captured Paletwa in the Chin State which lies on Myanmar's western borders with Bangladesh and India.



### A conflict within a conflict

Paletwa is a commercial town on the Kaladan River, and therefore, any armed group with a significant presence in the town would benefit from the economic activity in the region. Paletwa's location on the western border makes it a good launchpad for the Arakan Army to conduct its operations against the military.

The fall of Paletwa, a Chin ethnic majority town in the Rakhine State with a Rohingya Muslim majority has altered the dynamic between the Chin and the Arakan ethnic groups. On the other hand, some in the Rakhine State, previously known as Arakan, contend that the township was historically part of the Arakan Hill Tracts during colonial rule and should have been part of their province. There have been instances, prior to the coup, when Chin ethnic organisations expressed displeasure with the Arakan Army's operations in Paletwa.

In the recent past, ever since the Chin armed groups and the Arakan army have been fighting the Myanmar military, they have refrained from forcefully ascertaining their respective views of provincial borders. The Chin and Arakan groups agreed on an inclusive framework for the governance of Paletwa and adjoining areas to maintain peace and order. For an effective fight against the military, the Ethnic Armed



Organisations (EAOs) need to improve inter-ethnic solidarity by creatively accommodating each other's perspectives on ethnic boundaries. Finding an inter-ethnic compromise on settlements such as Paletwa can be particularly challenging.

### India's stake

The developments in Paletwa will also impact the Indian government's Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) in Myanmar. The Kaladan project was aimed at addressing the geo-economic and geo-political challenges of northeast India. The partition of the subcontinent and the subsequent hardening of borders converted northeast India into a landlocked region. Transporting goods to and from northeast India via the narrow Siliguri corridor is an expensive affair, and in a worst-case scenario with China, there is a possibility of movement along the corridor being adversely affected. Therefore, the Kaladan project was conceptualised as an alternative route that gives northeast India access to the sea.

India and Myanmar signed the framework agreement on the Kaladan project in 2008. The operationalisation of the project was delayed because of rugged terrain, inadequate inter-departmental coordination, political instability and security challenges in Myanmar. While the Sittwe port and inland water terminal at Paletwa have been completed in the past few years, road construction is facing challenges due to the prevailing security situation in Myanmar. For expeditious

implementation, the attitudes of the local ethnic organisations towards the Kaladan project should be factored in. The people of Mizoram and their co-ethnics across the border in Chin State are interested in the expedited completion of the Kaladan project, as it will spur economic activity in the region.

However, there is a perception in India that the Arakan Army is not favourably disposed to the Kaladan project. Prior to the coup, numerous reports indicated that India and Myanmar have launched coordinated operations against Arakan Army units that were operating close to India's borders near Mizoram and threatening the Kaladan project. In 2019, five Indian workers working on the project were kidnapped, reportedly by the Arakan Army. While all the workers were released, one Indian national died in the custody of kidnapers due to a cardiac arrest.

### China's investments in the region

The Chinese backed Three Brotherhood alliance comprising of the Arakan Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army has pledged to protect Chinese investments in Myanmar. The Arakan Army receives considerable funding and military equipment from China. China could use armed groups to slow down India's connectivity projects in Myanmar.

Meanwhile, the Chinese economic presence along Myanmar's Bay of Bengal coast has substantially increased. Beijing has operationalised oil and natural gas pipelines from the Shwe gas fields near Kyaukpyu in the Rakhine State to Yunan province in China. Two months ago, China signed supplementary agreements with the Myanmar military to operationalise the deep-sea port and a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) near Kyaukpyu. There were renewed efforts to construct a railway line from China's Yunnan to Kyaukpyu via Mandalay as part of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC).

Unlike India, China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which prompts many state and non-state actors in need of international support to be relatively more accommodating of China's concerns. Consequently, China is in a position to extend political and military support to various ethnic armed groups as well as to the Myanmar military to protect its economic interests.

There are important takeaways from the progress of the Kaladan project. Since India is a liberal democracy, its external engagement will be closely monitored for its impact on sectarian/identity-based violence in its neighbourhood. While security agencies will constantly evaluate the modalities of engaging with armed groups on India's borders, there is a need to scale up humanitarian and development assistance in coordination with a broader spectrum of ethnic organisations and local people to expedite projects such as Kaladan.

&gt;&gt;&gt;

# China-Myanmar Economic Corridor

Aims to connect the Middle Kingdom to the Indian Ocean, a key route in Beijing's 'Belt and Road' vision for infrastructure and influence spanning the globe

## Major projects

**New Yangon City Project**  
90 sq. km town planned on the west bank of the city's river



Yangon

Map source: [openstreetmap.org](https://www.openstreetmap.org)

Project suspended in 2011 due to environmental concerns

Myitsone dam

CHINA

INDIA

Kanpiketi

KACHIN

Border "economic cooperation zones"

Muse

YUNNAN

High-speed rail link, segment 1

Chinshwehaw

Mandalay

SHAN

Gas/oil pipelines

operational since 2013/14

MYANMAR

LAOS

Kyaukphyu

Deep-sea port and factory zone



Yangon

THAILAND

## China President visit January 17-18



Xi Jinping's first state visit to Myanmar

Expected to nail down multi-billion-dollar infrastructure deals

China holds the largest share of Myanmar's foreign debt - around \$4 billion or 40 percent

# The More You Learn, The More You Earn



**VEDHIK**  
IAS ACADEMY  
*The New Learning Mantra*

[www.vedhikiasacademy.org](http://www.vedhikiasacademy.org)





**POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

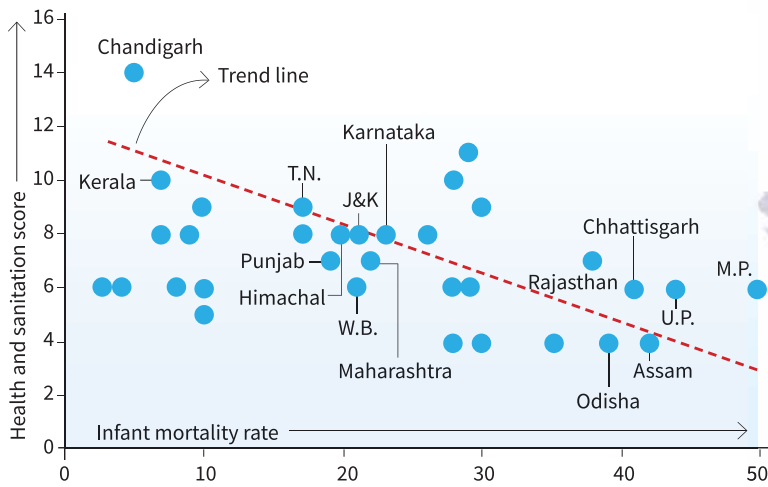
# HIGHER AUTONOMY OF PANCHAYATS LEADS TO BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

## More freedom at the grassroots

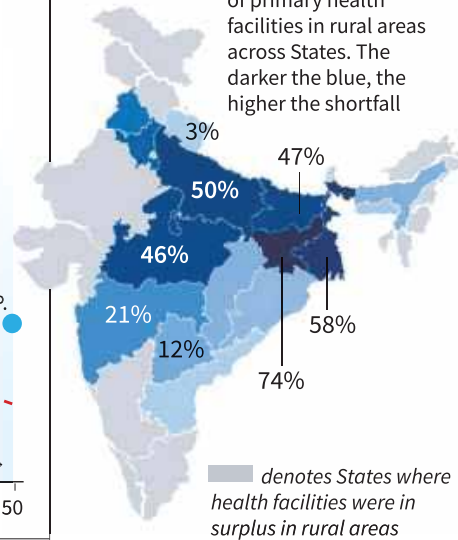
The charts are based on data collated from the RBI report titled, 'Finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions'



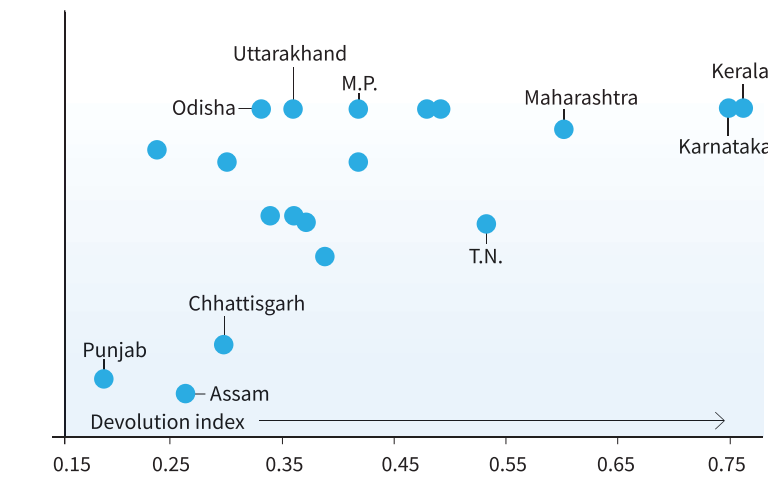
**Chart 1:** The chart shows the State/UT-wise avg. of panchayat-level health, nutrition and sanitation scores (vertical axis) and infant mortality rate (horizontal axis)



**Map 3:** % shortfall of primary health facilities in rural areas across States. The darker the blue, the higher the shortfall



**Chart 2:** The chart shows the devolution index calculated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, across States





# VEDHIK

## IAS ACADEMY

*The New Learning Mantra*

# START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

**INDIA'S  
TOP MOST  
CIVIL SERVANTS  
FOR COACHING**

[www.vedhikiasacademy.org](http://www.vedhikiasacademy.org)

*Head Office:*

**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
Mercy Estate,  
MG Road, Ravipuram,  
Ernakulam-682 015,

*Corporate office:*

**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,  
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,  
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

*Regional office*

**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,  
Museum Road. Bangalore -  
560001. Karnataka, India.

*GCC Office:*

**Bobscoedu,**  
Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L  
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,  
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain  
[www.bobscoedu.com](http://www.bobscoedu.com)