

● POLITY

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Himachal Govt. Fights For Survival Amid Crisis

CONTEXT: The Himachal Pradesh Congress government narrowly survived a crisis as it suspended 15 BJP lawmakers, including the Leader of the Opposition, passed the Budget for 2024-25, and grappled with internal leadership tensions amidst allegations of cross-voting and attempts by the BJP to destabilize the government.



BACKGROUND: The Congress government in Himachal Pradesh is facing a major crisis after six Congress MLAs cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha election, supporting the BJP candidate and leading to the defeat of the Congress nominee. This has thrown the state's political stability into question.

MAJOR POINTS: Himachal Pradesh Government in Crisis:

Congress Government Passes Budget Amidst Turmoil:

- The Congress government in Himachal Pradesh managed to pass the state budget by suspending 15 BJP MLAs, including the Leader of the Opposition.
- This action came after six Congress MLAs cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha election, jeopardizing the government's majority.

Internal Conflict and Leadership Issues:

- Minister Vikramaditya Singh briefly announced his resignation but then withdrew it, highlighting potential internal conflict within the Congress party.
- The party leadership sent mixed signals regarding their response to the situation.

Congress Takes Action Against Dissenting MLAs:

- The party filed a disqualification motion against the six MLAs who cross-voted.
- Congress communication chief asserted that the party will take tough actions to protect its government.

Accusations and Denials:

- The BJP accused the Congress of orchestrating the suspension of its MLAs and attempting to cling to power.

- The Congress, in turn, accused the BJP of trying to destabilize the state government through "Operation Lotus".

Uncertainty Remains:

- The fate of the government is still uncertain as the Speaker's decision on the disqualification motion and the party's ability to address internal dissent are pending.
- Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, a key figure in the Congress's recent election victory, criticized the BJP's alleged attempts to destabilize the state.

CONCLUSION: Amid political turmoil and accusations, the Himachal Pradesh Congress government's ability to maintain stability hinges on navigating internal divisions, addressing allegations of cross-voting, and countering BJP's efforts to destabilize, leaving the state's political future uncertain.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India Asks U.S. To Probe Pro-khalistani Groups

CONTEXT: The India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue focused on strengthening cooperation in counter-terrorism, including addressing pro-Khalistani groups operating in the U.S. and attacks on Indian missions abroad.



BACKGROUND OF THE INDIA-U.S. HOMELAND SECURITY DIALOGUE:

- The India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue is a platform for discussing and strengthening cooperation on security issues between the two countries.
- It was first held in 2011 but was re-established in 2021 after a hiatus.
- The dialogue focuses on various security concerns, including:

- **Counter-terrorism and violent extremism:** Addressing threats posed by terrorist and extremist groups operating in both countries.
- **Drug trafficking:** Combating the illegal drug trade, particularly the growing issue of Fentanyl in the U.S.
- **Transnational crimes:** Tackling issues like illegal immigration, human trafficking, money laundering, and cybercrimes.

RECENT TENSIONS:

- The dialogue comes amidst tensions between India and the U.S. regarding:
 - **Pro-Khalistan groups operating in the U.S.:** India has raised concerns about these groups allegedly instigating violence and carrying out attacks on Indian missions abroad.
 - **"Assassin for hire" case:** An ongoing investigation in the U.S. involving an Indian national accused of plotting the assassination of a pro-Khalistan activist, with India conducting its own separate investigation into the accusations.

INDIA'S EXPECTATIONS:

- During the dialogue, India reiterated its demands:
 - Investigation of pro-Khalistani groups operating in the U.S.
 - Action against individuals responsible for recent attacks on Indian missions abroad.



Importance of the India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue in the Context of the India-US Strategic Partnership:

- **Enhanced Security Cooperation:** Facilitates joint efforts to tackle terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking, bolstering national security.
- **Addressing Sensitive Issues:** Provides a platform to discuss sensitive matters like pro-Khalistani groups and attacks on Indian missions, fostering solutions while preserving bilateral relations.
- **Building Trust:** Regular engagement nurtures trust between security establishments, vital for effective cooperation and long-term solutions.
- **Strengthening Partnership:** Strengthens the strategic partnership by addressing security concerns, crucial for regional stability and global challenges.

CONCLUSION: The India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue serves as a vital mechanism for enhancing cooperation and addressing pressing security concerns between the two nations. Amidst recent tensions and challenges, the dialogue underscores the importance of open communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding in safeguarding national interests and strengthening the strategic partnership between India and the U.S. in tackling shared security threats effectively.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PM Modi Inaugurates Country's First Indigenous Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched India's first indigenously built hydrogen fuel cell ferry boat, a pilot project showcasing clean energy technology for future urban mobility.



INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS HYDROGEN FERRY LAUNCHED

- **Historic Launch:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated India's first indigenously built hydrogen fuel cell ferry boat.
- **Pilot Project:** This 24-meter catamaran, built by Cochin Shipyard, can carry 50 passengers and features air conditioning. It serves as a pilot project for clean energy solutions in urban mobility.
- **Pioneering Clean Energy:** The ferry utilizes homegrown technology and aligns with India's net-zero emission goals, showcasing a significant step towards embracing clean energy.
- **Replication Potential:** According to Cochin Shipyard, the technology can be replicated in other regions for further application in urban mobility.
- **Additional Boost:** Mr. Modi also highlighted the launch of various rail projects, aiming to strengthen connectivity between south Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Mizoram Assembly Adopts Resolution Against Border Fence

CONTEXT: The Mizoram Assembly passed a resolution opposing the Indian government's decision to fence the border with Myanmar and scrap a free movement agreement, citing the historical division of the Zo ethnic group and its desire for reunification.



BACKGROUND TO THE MIZORAM ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON THE INDIA-MYANMAR BORDER AND OTHER ISSUES:

- The Indian government announced plans to fence the 1,643-km border with Myanmar and scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement.
- The FMR allows residents on both sides of the border to travel visa-free within a 16 km radius for a limited period.
- The Mizoram Assembly opposes this decision, citing the historical division of the Zo ethnic group inhabiting Mizoram and Myanmar.
- They argue that the border fence would further separate a people group with a shared history and aspirations for reunification.
- While Mizoram and Nagaland oppose the fencing plan, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh support it, highlighting differing concerns among the northeastern states bordering Myanmar.

WHO ARE ZO COMMUNITY?

The Zo people are an ethnic group spread across several countries in Southeast Asia, primarily inhabiting:

- **Mizoram, India:** The dominant Mizo people belong to the Zo ethnic group.
- **Manipur, India:** The Kuki-Zomi people are part of the Zo group.
- **Myanmar:** The Chin people are a major Zo community in Myanmar.
- **Bangladesh:** The Kuki-Chin people residing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts belong to the Zo ethnicity.

Shared characteristics bind the Zo people together, including:

- **Linguistic similarities:** They share a common ancestral language and related dialects.
- **Cultural traditions:** They have similar cultural practices, beliefs, and customs.
- **Historical background:** They share a sense of common history

and ancestral origins.

POTENTIAL FALLOUT OF THE BORDER FENCE AND FMR SCRAPPING:

- **Strained relations with Mizoram:** The Mizoram Assembly's resolution signifies strong opposition from the state, potentially leading to further friction and resentment towards the central government.
- **Impact on Zo community:** The fencing and restricted movement could negatively impact the cultural, social, and economic ties between the divided Zo communities in Mizoram and Myanmar.
- **Increased border tensions:** The fencing might not effectively address security concerns and could even lead to increased tensions along the border due to perceived restrictions on movement.
- **Economic disruption:** Businesses and livelihoods reliant on cross-border trade and movement could be negatively affected, impacting communities on both sides of the border.
- **Negative impact on regional cooperation:** The dispute could hinder broader efforts towards regional cooperation and development in the Northeast.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

- **Open dialogue and consultation:** Engaging with the Mizoram government and other stakeholders through open dialogue and addressing their concerns is crucial.
- **Alternative security measures:** Exploring alternative security measures that do not involve physical barriers and consider the cultural and historical context of the region could be beneficial.
- **Phased approach and pilot projects:** Implementing a phased approach with pilot projects in specific areas could allow for evaluating the effectiveness of chosen solutions and making adjustments as necessary.
- **Focus on regional development:** Investing in regional development projects and initiatives that benefit all bordering states could foster a sense of shared prosperity and cooperation.
- **Respecting cultural ties:** Recognizing the unique cultural ties between communities and finding ways to facilitate responsible cross-border movement while addressing security concerns is essential.

CONCLUSION: The Mizoram Assembly resolution highlights the complexities of border management and ethnic aspirations. While security concerns are vital, finding solutions that address the concerns of divided communities like the Zo people and fostering regional cooperation through open dialogue and alternative security measures are crucial for a sustainable and peaceful resolution.


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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Nepal-India Official Dialogue Silent On Landmark Pancheshwar Project

CONTEXT: Despite recent high-level dialogues, the Pancheshwar project remains stalled due to unresolved differences concerning water sharing and benefit distribution between India and Nepal.



BACKGROUND OF THE STALLED PANCHESHWAR MULTIPURPOSE PROJECT:

- The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project (PMP) is a proposed bi-national project between India and Nepal, envisioned as the largest bilateral power project between the two countries.
- The project aims to generate 6,480 MW of electricity, equally divided between both nations. Additionally, it would provide irrigation benefits for vast areas of land in Nepal and India and offer flood control measures.
- Despite signing a long-term power-sharing agreement recently, India and Nepal haven't progressed on finalizing the PMP due to ongoing disagreements.

What is PANCHESHWAR MULTIPURPOSE PROJECT?

The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project (PMP) is a proposed bi-national project between India and Nepal, envisioned as the largest joint infrastructure initiative undertaken by the two countries

Goals:

- **Hydropower generation:** The project aims to generate a massive 6,480 MW of electricity, with an equal share (3,240 MW each) being distributed to India and Nepal.
- **Irrigation:** The project would provide much-needed irrigation water for vast areas of agricultural land:
 - 130,000 hectares in Nepal
 - 240,000 hectares in India
- **Flood control:** The PMP also aims to mitigate the risks of flooding in the region.

Key points of contention:

- **Benefit-sharing:** While electricity is proposed to be split equally, Nepal feels India receives a disproportionate share of

irrigation and flood control benefits.

- **Water valuation:** Nepal considers water a valuable resource ("white gold") and seeks additional compensation beyond the project's current framework.
- **India's concerns:** Accepting Nepal's stance on water valuation might set a precedent conflicting with existing water-sharing agreements like the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan.

Current status:

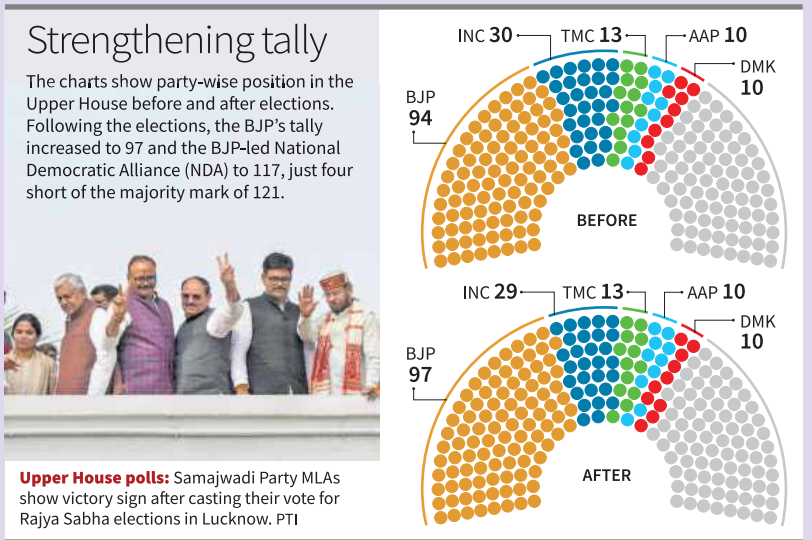
- Discussions within the Pancheshwar Development Authority haven't progressed, and the project remains stalled.
- Resolving the dispute requires political will and a mutually agreeable solution from both sides, considering Nepal's desire for fair compensation and India's concerns about broader implications.

CONCLUSION: The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project holds significant potential for enhancing energy security, improving agricultural productivity, and mitigating flood risks in both India and Nepal. However, overcoming the current hurdles through open dialogue and collaborative efforts remains essential for its successful implementation.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

RS Poll Outcome Puts NDA Just Four Short Of The Majority Mark In The Upper House

CONTEXT: The results of the Rajya Sabha elections have improved the BJP-led NDA's position in the Upper House, bringing them closer to a majority and potentially impacting the passage of legislation.



RAJYA SABHA ELECTION RESULTS: NDA NEARS MAJORITY

Results:

- The BJP-led NDA now has 117 seats in the Rajya Sabha, just four short of a majority.

The BJP gained two additional seats due to cross-voting in

Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Significance:

- This strengthens the NDA's position in the Upper House, potentially impacting the passage of legislation.
- Previously, the NDA lacked a majority in the Rajya Sabha, leading to challenges in passing bills.

Previous Scenario:

- Since 2014, the NDA had a majority in the Lok Sabha but faced hurdles in the Rajya Sabha.
- The NDA relied on the support of neutral parties like BJD and YSRCP for crucial legislation.

Current Standings:

- BJP: 97 seats (including nominated members)
- NDA: 117 seats
- Congress: 29 seats
- Other parties: Varied representation (TMC - 13, DMK & AAP - 10 each, etc.)

CONCLUSION: With the NDA nearing a majority in the Rajya Sabha, the upcoming legislative landscape in India could see a shift towards smoother passage of bills, potentially impacting domestic politics.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Top Spanish Official Likely To Pitch Deal For Submarine

CONTEXT: Amidst Germany's push for an inter-governmental agreement on selling submarines to India, Spain's Secretary of State for Defence is set to visit Delhi, likely to pitch a deal for advanced conventional submarines as part of the Indian Navy's tender, in collaboration with Navantia and Larsen & Toubro.



Background of India's Submarine Deal:

India's Need for New Submarines:

- India's existing submarine fleet is aging, and acquiring new submarines is crucial for maintaining its underwater deterrence and safeguarding its maritime interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The P-75I project aims to procure six advanced conventional submarines to replace older ones and enhance the Navy's capabilities.

Why Countries are Interested:

- The P-75I deal is a lucrative opportunity for defense companies due to its large scale (₹43,000 crore) and strategic significance.
- Participating in this project allows companies to showcase their technological prowess and potentially establish a long-term partnership with India.

Key Players and their Standing:

- **Germany (Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems - TKMS):**
 - Offered a government-to-government agreement and has experience in submarine construction.
 - Discussed the deal with Indian officials in January 2024.
- **Spain (Navantia):**
 - Partnered with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for design and construction, respectively.
 - Showcased their next-generation AIP module and willingness for technology transfer.
 - Spanish Secretary of State for Defence visiting India in March 2024 to likely discuss the deal.

Companies that were not shortlisted include:

- **France:** Naval Group (formerly DCNS), the company behind the Scorpène-class submarines, did not submit a bid for the P-75I project. This could be due to various reasons, such as not meeting specific technical requirements, strategic considerations, or focusing their efforts on other Indian defense projects.

Challenges in the Acquisition Process:

- The project faced delays due to technical specifications, including the requirement for a proven Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) module with a two-week endurance.
- Evaluating complex bids from different countries with varying technical aspects can be time-consuming.

Current Stage:

- Both bids are currently undergoing evaluation by Indian authorities.
- The upcoming visit by the Spanish official suggests their continued interest and potential for further discussions.

Additional Information:

- This deal is being processed under the "strategic partnership model," aiming for technology transfer and domestic production capabilities.
- The final decision on awarding the contract is expected in the future, and factors like technical specifications, cost-effectiveness, and strategic partnerships will likely play a role.

CONCLUSION: As India weighs its options for acquiring new submarines, Spain's upcoming visit adds another dimension to the competition. The coming weeks could see intensified efforts from both Germany and Spain to secure this significant defense deal.



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

3,300 Kg Of Drugs Seized Off Gujarat Coast; 5 Held

CONTEXT: In a major drug bust, Indian authorities seized 3,300 kg of narcotics off the Gujarat coast, marking the largest offshore drug seizure in the country's history.



Background of the Largest Offshore Drug Seizure in India:

- **Drug Trafficking Concerns:** The seizure highlights the growing concern about illegal drug trafficking through maritime routes in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- **Goa Maritime Conclave:** This issue was flagged at the Goa Maritime Conclave in October 2023, emphasizing the need for information sharing and collaboration among IOR countries to combat this threat.
- **National Narcotics Coordination Portal:** The central government established this portal in 2019 to facilitate information sharing and coordination between various agencies involved in combating drug trafficking.

Recent Efforts to Address Drug Trafficking:

- **Joint Operation:** The seizure involved collaboration between the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the Navy, and the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad, showcasing an attempt to strengthen inter-agency cooperation.
- **Operation Sagar Manthan-I:** This operation is part of a series of recent exercises undertaken by various agencies to tackle drug trafficking.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEIZURE:

This significant drug bust reflects the ongoing efforts by Indian authorities to combat drug trafficking, particularly through maritime routes. It also highlights the challenges associated with information sharing and international cooperation in addressing this complex issue.

CONCLUSION: While the seizure represents a significant victory in the fight against drug trafficking, the mention of suspected Pakistani links and the packaging material bearing Pakistani markings suggest the presence of international networks involved. Continued vigilance, international collaboration, and effective information sharing remain crucial for tackling this complex and persistent challenge.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Nagging Problem Of Katchatheevu

CONTEXT: The annual festival at St. Anthony's Church in Katchatheevu, an islet claimed by both India and Sri Lanka, is being boycotted by Indian fishermen protesting the arrest and sentencing of their colleagues by Sri Lankan authorities.

BACKGROUND: KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND DISPUTE AND TENSIONS

- Katchatheevu, an islet near Sri Lanka, is claimed by both India and Sri Lanka.
- Indian fishermen have traditionally fished in the area, but Sri Lanka considers it poaching and arrests Indian fishermen.
- This has been a source of tension for decades, with Indian fishermen facing arrests and imprisonment by Sri Lankan authorities.
- The annual festival at St. Anthony's Church in Katchatheevu, attended by both Indian and Sri Lankan communities, has historically served as a symbol of reconciliation.

MAJOR POINTS

Katchatheevu Festival Boycott and Strike by Indian Fishermen

1. Protest Against Arrests:

- Fishermen's associations in Ramanathapuram announced a boycott of the annual festival at St. Anthony's Church in Katchatheevu and an indefinite strike.
- This action is a protest against the Sri Lankan government's continued arrests of Indian fishermen on poaching charges.

2. Harsher Sentences by Sri Lankan Judiciary:

- A recent shift in Sri Lanka's judicial approach saw five Indian fishermen sentenced to prison terms for repeat poaching offenses.

3. History of the Katchatheevu Festival:

- The festival, held jointly by India and Sri Lanka, traditionally fosters cultural exchange and promotes good relations.
- The Church was built by the Ramnad Diocese over 100 years ago and is currently under the Jaffna diocese.

4. Reasons for Boycott:

- The fishermen's families see participating in the festival as insensitive while their colleagues are imprisoned in Sri Lanka.

5. India's Response to Arrests:

- Indian authorities provide legal assistance to imprisoned fishermen and urge Sri Lanka to treat the issue humanely.
- However, Sri Lanka retains impounded fishing vessels, causing further frustration among Indian fishermen.

6. Efforts to Resolve the Issue:

- Previous attempts, including a high-level meeting organized by former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, haven't yielded lasting solutions.

7. Fishermen's Demands and Government's Response:

- Some fishermen seek renewed fishing rights in Katchatheevu and the islet's retrieval.
- The Indian government, focused on abolishing bottom trawling,

encourages fishermen to diversify their activities with support for deep-sea fishing and alternative livelihood options.

CONCLUSION: The Katchatheevu issue remains unresolved, despite efforts to foster reconciliation through cultural exchange. The recent sentencing of Indian fishermen and the continued seizure of vessels highlight the need for a sustainable solution that addresses the concerns of both sides, considering the livelihoods dependent on the Palk Bay and exploring alternative fishing practices.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Practice And Law: Debating Aspects Of The Muslim Personal Law

CONTEXT: The debate surrounding aspects of Muslim personal law, including practices like talaq, khula, and nikah halala, is underscored by a complex interplay of legal interpretations, societal norms, and political dynamics, with recent legislative changes and judicial interventions adding further fuel to the discourse.



BACKGROUND: SCRUTINY OF MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW IN INDIA

Muslim personal law, particularly concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance, has been under increasing scrutiny in India in recent years. This has been driven by a combination of factors:

- **High-profile legal cases:** Landmark judgments like the Supreme Court's Triple Talaq verdict in 2017 and the Babri Masjid case in 2019 have brought Muslim personal law to the forefront of public discourse.
- **Academic and literary analysis:** Authors and scholars like Asghar Ali Engineer, Tahir Mahmood, and Salman Khurshid have contributed to a deeper understanding of Muslim personal law through their writings.
- **Misunderstandings and misuse:** Concerns exist around the potential for misinterpreting and misusing certain concepts, like talaq, khula, and nikah halala, to the detriment of women in Muslim communities.
- **Political considerations:** vested interests have sometimes used these issues for "narrow political and social gain," impacting the discussions surrounding Muslim personal law.

SCRUTINY OF MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW IN INDIA: KEY POINTS

1. Increased Focus on Muslim Personal Law:

- Muslim personal law, governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other aspects, has received growing attention in recent years.
- This is partly due to high-profile legal cases like the Triple Talaq and Babri Masjid verdicts.

2. Academic and Literary Analysis:

- Scholars and authors like Asghar Ali Engineer, Tahir Mahmood, and Salman Khurshid have contributed to understanding Muslim personal law through their research and writings.

3. Concerns about Misunderstanding and Misuse:

- concerns have already been raised by some that concepts like talaq, khula, and nikah halala are often misunderstood and misused, particularly to the detriment of women.
- Some argue that this misuse stems from a lack of proper understanding or deliberate manipulation for "narrow political and social gain."

4. Debate and Nuance are Crucial:

- Scholars often acknowledge the importance of open discussions and scrutiny of legal issues but emphasize the need for a nuanced approach that avoids generalizations and stereotypes.

5. Balancing Rights and Addressing Discrepancies:

- There is often tension between upholding the established rights of minorities and addressing the potential gap between legal provisions and actual practices within Muslim communities.

6. Need for Reform and Sensitization:

- While acknowledging the "glorious law on women's rights" in Islamic principles, some scholars suggest a need to address discrepancies between legal rights and prevailing practices to ensure the well-being of women.

CONCLUSION: The ongoing scrutiny and debate surrounding Muslim personal law in India highlight the complexity of balancing legal interpretations, societal norms, and political interests, underscoring the imperative for nuanced discussions, reform efforts, and sensitization to ensure the protection of rights and well-being within Muslim communities.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Gaza Death Count Nears 30,000 As UN Warns Of An 'imminent' Famine

CONTEXT: The reported death toll nearing 30,000 in Gaza amid ongoing battles between Israel and Hamas has prompted UN warnings of an imminent famine, while mediators from Egypt, Qatar, and the U.S. seek a ceasefire deal amidst dire humanitarian conditions and food shortages.



MAJOR POINTS

- Situation in Gaza: Fighting continues in Gaza, with the death toll nearing 30,000.
- Mediation Efforts: Egypt, Qatar, and the U.S. are mediating for a ceasefire, seeking a six-week pause in the conflict.
- Prospects of Ceasefire: A deal, including the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian detainees, may be imminent.
- Qatar's Perspective: Qatar is hopeful but cautious about reaching an agreement.
- Israeli Withdrawal Demand: Hamas seeks the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, but Israel rejects this demand.
- Humanitarian Concerns: Dire humanitarian conditions, including food shortages and displacement, persist in Gaza.
- Warning of Famine: UN officials warn of an imminent famine in northern Gaza if the situation does not improve.

CONCLUSION: The reported death toll nearing 30,000 in Gaza, coupled with UN warnings of an imminent famine, underscores the urgent need for a ceasefire and humanitarian intervention. Mediation efforts from Egypt, Qatar, and the U.S. offer hope for a resolution, but the persistent humanitarian crisis emphasizes the gravity of the situation and the necessity for immediate action to alleviate suffering and prevent further loss of life.



"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."
—Benjamin Franklin

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Lives And Livelihoods

CONTEXT: The reported death toll nearing 30,000 in Gaza amid ongoing battles between Israel and Hamas has prompted UN warnings of an imminent famine, while mediators from Egypt, Qatar, and the U.S. seek a ceasefire deal amidst dire humanitarian conditions and food shortages.

BACKGROUND: Indian citizens seeking work abroad have been lured into dangerous situations in conflict zones, particularly Ukraine and Israel. It has raised concerns about the government's ability to protect them and the lack of adequate protocols to prevent such situations. This has sparked a broader discussion about the need for stronger protocols and regional cooperation to protect Indian emigrants from exploitation and danger, particularly in conflict zones.

MAJOR POINTS:

Indian Workers in War Zone Raise Concerns

1. Recruitment and Location:

- The Indian government confirmed Indian nationals were recruited by the Russian military and placed in Ukrainian territory under Russian control.
- These individuals were employed for support tasks, not combat roles.

2. Government Response:

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) claimed limited knowledge and denied accusations of delayed response.
- They stated they pressured Russia for the workers' "early discharge."

3. Information Gap and Exploitation:

- The government remained silent despite evidence suggesting dozens of Indians joined the war, lured by misleading job offers.
- Reports in The Hindu, including the death of an Indian worker, prompted the government's acknowledgment.

4. Urgent Action Needed:

- The current situation highlights the need for:
- Awareness campaigns to combat misinformation and exploitation of Indian workers seeking employment abroad.
- Investigation into unscrupulous recruitment networks.

5. Strengthening Protocols:

The government must:

- Review procedures for countries in conflict, including updating the "Emigration Check Required" list.
- Thoroughly vet contracts and improve pre-departure guidance for Indian emigrants.
- Seek regional cooperation with Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to address similar issues.

6. Addressing Root Causes:

- The high number of Indians in dangerous situations reflects:
- Deep economic distress and job shortages within India.
- While addressing these issues is complex, the government must demonstrate empathy and implement comprehensive support structures for vulnerable emigrants.

7. Greenlighting Recruitment in Other Conflict Zones:

- The government's approval of recruitment drives in conflict

zones like Israel raises further concerns.

CONCLUSION: The presence of Indian workers in conflict zones underscores the pressing need for proactive measures, including robust protocols, enhanced information dissemination, and regional cooperation, to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of emigrants and prevent exploitation in such precarious situations.

Additional SP and one of his escorts were abducted by the armed miscreants. They were later rescued from Kwakeithel Konjeng Leikai area and admitted to Raj Medicity for medical treatment.

Arambai Tenggol (AT), a relatively new outfit that gained prominence after the ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities that started in Manipur on May 3, 2023, enjoys tremendous support among the Meitei people.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Manipur Police Protest Against Meitei Outfit

CONTEXT: Police personnel across the Meitei-dominated valley districts of Manipur laid down arms on Wednesday to protest against the abduction of a police officer by members of Arambai Tenggol, a radical Meitei outfit.



On Tuesday, around 200 armed men stormed the residence of Additional Superintendent of Police Moirangthem Amit in Imphal East, seeking the release of Robin M., chief of Arambai Tenggol's Sekmai unit, who was arrested earlier in the day for allegedly snatching a vehicle from a petrol pump. The

INTERNAL SECURITY

Govt. Bans 2 Factions Of Jammu & Kashmir Outfit Under UAPA

CONTEXT: The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday declared two factions of the Muslim Conference, Jammu and Kashmir (MCJK), led by Abdul Ghani Bhat and Ghulam Nabi Sumji, respectively, as "unlawful association" under the anti-terror Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The two groups, which are a constituent of the Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), have not been active for several years have been engaging in activities against the sovereignty and integrity of the nation". Both factions have been banned for five years.

In 2017, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, who had been the head of the APHC, was removed as the president of the Muslim Conference after meeting with the Government of India's special representative, the late Dineshwar Sharma, and expressing his willingness to talk to the Centre. He is considered to be a moderate and the group has negligible presence.

Ghulam Nabi Sumji, a former MLA, resigned in 1989 to join the Hurriyat. A notification by the Ministry said the MCJK-B, chaired by Bhat, has linkages with banned terrorist organisations and has supported terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The members of the MCJK-B have been indulging in generating feelings of hatred and disaffection against India to separate Jammu and Kashmir from the Union of India, and its leaders have raised funds through various sources, including Pakistan and its proxy organisations, for perpetrating unlawful activities, including supporting terrorist activities and sustained pelting of stones on Indian security forces. The MCJK-S, the outfit chaired by Ghulam Nabi Sumji, is known for its anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda.

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