● POLITY  ● ECONOMICS  ● TECHNOLOGY  ● ECOLOGY

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**ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT**

## PM FLAGS OFF COUNTRY'S FIRST REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM 'NAMO BHARAT'

**CONTEXT:** PM Modi inaugurates India's first RRTS, rides Namo Bharat train, marking a significant transportation milestone.

**BACKGROUND:** Prime Minister Modi rode the Namo Bharat Train on a 17-km stretch from Sahibabad to Duhai Depot in Uttar Pradesh, marking the commencement of the 82-km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor. The project aims to enhance connectivity and generate employment opportunities, with a full rollout expected by 2025

**DELHI-GHAZIABAD-MEERUT RRTS CORRIDOR**

- Inauguration Details: The 17 km priority section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor, connecting Sahibabad to Duhai Depot, is set to be inaugurated.
- PM's Vision: The project aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision to enhance regional connectivity through world-class transport infrastructure.
- RRTS Project: The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) is a rail-based, high-speed commuter transit system with a design speed of 180 Kmph.
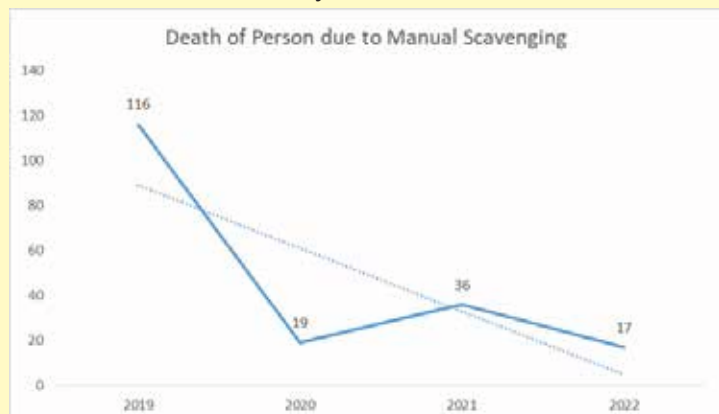


- Eight Corridors: A total of eight RRTS corridors are planned for the National Capital Region, with three prioritized for Phase-I.
- Transformational Mobility: The RRTS aims to provide efficient and modern intercity commuting solutions, boost economic activity, and reduce congestion and pollution.

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**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## ERADICATE MANUAL SCAVENGING, SC TELLS CENTRE, STATES

**CONTEXT:** Supreme Court addresses persistence of manual scavenging and its impact on fraternity, equality, and dignity.

**BACKGROUND:** A judicial bench, led by Justice S.R. Bhat, has emphasized the commitment of the Union and states to eradicate manual scavenging through strict enforcement of the 2013 Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act. Compensation for sewer deaths has been raised to ₹30 lakh, highlighting the importance of dignity and fraternity as emphasized in the Constitution. The case will be monitored further in February 2024.



**Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers**

- Financial Support: Swachhta Udyami Yojana offers loans for sanitation equipment to workers and local bodies.
- Capital Subsidy: SRMS provides subsidies for sanitation equipment to manual scavengers and workers.
- Awareness Workshops: Workshops educate urban body officials and workers on safe cleaning practices.
- Training Programs: Sanitation workers receive training in mechanized cleaning and safety practices.
- NAMASTE Scheme: Government initiative formalizes manual scavenger rehabilitation and promotes safe cleaning practices.

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# THE POLITICS OF A CASTE CENSUS, ITS IMPACT ON SECULARISM

**CONTEXT:** Opposition leaders emphasize caste census, while Modi has dominated agenda-setting in Indian politics.

**BACKGROUND:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has wielded significant influence in setting India's political agenda, from demonetization to the concept of simultaneous elections. In response to calls for a caste census, he emphasizes poverty as his primary focus, a viewpoint that lacks ascriptive identities in caste, religion, or race, resembling a Marxist argument. This reflects the political reality of contemporary India.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Scholars emphasize two types of poverty in India: economic and institutional, with caste playing a crucial role in perpetuating institutional poverty by determining occupations and skills. Caste-based networks shape modern Indian occupations, underscoring the need for a caste census. Modi's dismissal of this link overlooks a painful truth in Indian society, echoed by past policy approaches, including the Nehru-Mahalanobis model. Recognition of the deep-seated connection between caste and poverty is vital and long overdue.

**News Highlights**

- Hindutva's Fear: Hindutva opposes a caste census, fearing it may spark divisive power struggles.
- Hindu Majoritarian Unity: Hindutva leverages religious polarization for political power.
- Secular Groups' Concerns: Secular parties also fear caste census may boost Hindu majoritarian influence.
- Caste Politics in UP: Caste-based politics once helped secularize Indian politics.
- Hindutva Resurgence: Since 2014, Hindutva has gained prominence in India.
- Limited Secular Revival: Caste census may contain Hindutva but won't ensure full secular revival.
- Historical Context: Last caste census was in 1931, when the right had limited influence.
- Secular Resistance: Embedded right-wing groups may have contributed to opposing secularism and the caste census.

# GAGANYAAN MISSION: ISRO IS SET FOR FIRST TEST FLIGHT TODAY

**CONTEXT:** ISRO to conduct Gaganyaan's Crew Escape System test mission, demonstrating abort capabilities on October 21.

**BACKGROUND:** ISRO is testing an abort mission using a single-stage liquid rocket with a Crew Module (CM) and Crew Escape Systems (CES). The unpressurized CM simulates an abort during ascent, reaching Mach 1.2. CES and CM separate at 17 km, initiating an autonomous abort sequence, concluding with a safe CM landing in the sea near Sriharikota.



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Rapid Flight Duration: Entire mission, from lift-off to sea touchdown, takes about 8.5 minutes.
- Indian Navy Recovery: Indian Navy leads crew module recovery after sea touchdown.
- Mission Objectives: Evaluate and demonstrate critical systems for crew safety and recovery.
- CES Safety Check: Mission tests Crew Escape System's capability for emergency mission abort.
- Gaganyaan Mission: Aims to launch, orbit, and safely return three crew members to Earth.

**GAGANYAAN**

- Gaganyaan Objectives: Demonstrate human spaceflight capability with a 3-day mission to a 400 km orbit.
- Collaborative Approach: Involves ISRO's expertise, industry, academia, and international technologies.
- Critical Technologies: Development includes a human-rated launch vehicle, life support system, and crew management.
- Precursor Missions: Demonstrator missions like IADT, PAT, and TV flights to ensure safety and reliability.
- LVM3 Rocket: Proven LVM3 launcher reconfigured as Human Rated LVM3 for Gaganyaan mission.
- Orbital Module: HLVM3 capable of launching Orbital Module to a 400 km Low Earth Orbit.

## ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

# 'HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION PROPPING UP ECONOMY'

**CONTEXT:** MPC meeting discusses balancing inflation control with stimulating household consumption to support economic growth.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** MPC member Prof. Jayanth R. Varma stated that inflation risks slightly increased due to potential food price volatility from insufficient rainfall. He emphasized a willingness to consume at the expense of reduced savings, highlighting the role of household consumption in supporting the economy amid fiscal challenges, weak external demand, and limited capital investment.

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

# GOVT. DELAY DISTURBS JUDICIAL SENIORITY: SC

The Supreme Court expressed concern over the government's delayed judicial appointments and transfers in High Courts. It raised questions about the selective handling of these appointments, where certain names were cleared quickly, while others faced prolonged delays. This situation was seen as disturbing and created issues related to judicial seniority. The government defended its process, stating that transfer recommendations were considered in batches.

### UNDERSTANDING THE COLLEGIUM SYSTEM AND ITS EVOLUTION

The Collegium System is the mechanism for appointing and transferring judges, shaped by judgments of the Supreme Court, rather than by parliamentary legislation or constitutional provisions.

Development of the System:

**First Judges Case (1981):**

This case determined that the Chief Justice of India's (CJI) recommendation for judicial appointments and transfers could be rejected with "cogent reasons," granting the executive authority over judicial appointments for the next 12 years.

**Second Judges Case (1993):**

In this case, the Supreme Court introduced the Collegium system, interpreting "consultation" as "concurrence." It emphasized that it wasn't solely the CJI's opinion but an institutional opinion formed in consultation with the two most senior judges in the Supreme Court.

**Third Judges Case (1998):**

On a reference by the President under Article 143, the Supreme Court expanded the Collegium to a five-member body, comprising the CJI and the four most senior judges.

**Leadership of the Collegium System:**

The Supreme Court Collegium is led by the CJI, along with the four most senior judges. High Court Collegiums are headed by the incumbent Chief Justice and the two other most senior judges. Judges in the upper echelons of the judiciary are exclusively selected through the collegium system, with the government's involvement coming into play only once the collegium has made its decisions.

**INTERNAL SECURITY**

# CBI'S 'CHAKRA-II' OPERATION YIELDS BREAKTHROUGH IN INTERNATIONAL ONLINE INVESTMENT FRAUD AND IMPERSONATION RACKET CASES

In its ongoing 'Chakra-II' operation, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has made significant progress in addressing two distinct cases related to cybercrimes. These cases revolve around an elaborate international online investment fraud and a cyber-enabled impersonation racket that targeted Singaporean citizens. Below are the details of these cases:

**International Online Investment Fraud Case:**

The CBI initiated the first case in the previous year, prompted by various sources, including information from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

The investigation uncovered an intricate scheme orchestrated by individuals residing abroad. These suspects defrauded Indian citizens by falsely offering investment opportunities, loans, and job prospects.

**Cyber-Enabled Impersonation Racket Case:**

The second case under scrutiny involves a cyber-enabled impersonation racket that victimized citizens from Singapore.

As part of the ongoing operation, the CBI is examining the intricate details of this racket, aiming to bring those responsible to justice.

**Operation Chakra II**

India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has commenced Operation Chakra II, targeting transnational organized cyber-enabled financial crimes. The CBI is collaborating with Microsoft and Amazon, along with national and international agencies, to combat and dismantle illegal call center infrastructure.

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# SINO-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS

**President Xi Jinping Assures Sri Lankan Counterpart of Unconditional Assistance**

During the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, President Xi Jinping reassured Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of China's commitment to supporting Sri Lanka without attaching any political conditions. He emphasized the sincerity and lasting friendship in the China-Sri Lanka strategic cooperative partnership, highlighting Sri Lanka's role as one of the initial countries to join China's ambitious connectivity project. Both nations pledged to enhance collaboration in international and regional affairs, opposing the politicization of human rights issues and confrontational blocs.

**Focus on Debt Treatment**

Sri Lanka is currently in discussions to finalize a debt treatment plan with its creditors, including China. While Sri Lanka is grappling with economic challenges, the Chinese statement did not mention the island nation's debt. Nevertheless, a joint statement released later confirmed China's commitment to continue supporting its financial institutions in conducting friendly consultations with Sri Lanka to reach an early agreement on debt treatment. This approach aims to help Sri Lanka address its existing difficulties, alleviate its debt burden, and support sustainable development.

**Collaborative Initiatives and Support**

In addition to debt-related discussions, the joint statement underlines Sri Lanka's firm support and active participation in China's Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI), and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). These initiatives demonstrate the commitment of both countries to collaborate on matters of mutual interest and shared development goals.

**International Monetary Fund (IMF) Agreement**

Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that it reached a staff-level agreement with Sri Lanka on economic policies, marking the first review of the 48-month-long package. Upon approval by the IMF Executive Board, Sri Lanka will gain access to approximately $330 million as its second tranche of the Extended Fund Facility from the IMF. These funds aim to support the stabilization of Sri Lanka's economy as it begins to show initial signs of improvement.

**Ensuring Creditor Parity and Transparency**

Notably, Sri Lanka has engaged in discussions with all its official creditors, including China, India, and Japan, which are its three largest bilateral lenders. Sri Lanka has assured both India and Japan of creditor parity and transparency, ensuring that terms negotiated for a moratorium or revision of loan maturity periods or interest rates are comparable for all creditors. This approach aims to maintain fairness and consistency in Sri Lanka's dealings with its international creditors.

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