

27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

## 1. Opposition's larger demography, LoP's big responsibility GS 2 (Legislature)

- **Why in News:** The 2024 general election resulted in the numerically largest Opposition in Lok Sabha history, with over 234 seats. This has reignited discussions about the role and significance of the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Indian parliamentary democracy.
- **Historical and Legal Framework of LoP:**
  - **Definition and Recognition:** The Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977 first defined the LoP as the leader of the party in opposition with the greatest numerical strength.
  - **Numerical Requirement:** To be recognized as LoP, a party needs 10% of the House strength (54 seats in Lok Sabha) as per Speaker's Direction 121 from the 1950s.
  - **Impact of 10th Schedule:** The 10th Schedule's recognition of all political parties as "parties" regardless of size has made the earlier categorization of parties and groups less relevant.
- **Significance and Challenges of LoP in Indian Context:**
  - **Westminster Tradition:** In Westminster tradition, the LoP is considered the Prime Minister-in-waiting and forms a shadow cabinet to scrutinize government policies.
  - **Indian Adaptation:** India hasn't adopted the shadow cabinet system, and the 1977 Act doesn't define specific functions for the LoP.
  - **Opposition Unity:** The LoP faces challenges in uniting a diverse opposition without the power-sharing arrangements available to ruling coalitions.
- **Impact of 2024 Election on Opposition's Role:**
  - **Increased Influence:** The unprecedented 234+ opposition members have boosted opposition morale and influence in parliamentary proceedings.
  - **Parliamentary Dynamics:** This new dynamic can affect question admissions, bill debates, committee referrals, and other House functions.
  - **LoP's Responsibility:** The LoP has a crucial responsibility to maintain opposition unity and effectively communicate government failures to the public.
- **Potential for Strengthening Democratic Traditions:**
  - **Communication Channels:** British tradition encourages direct communication between the Prime Minister and LoP on major policy initiatives.
  - **Historical Precedents:** Historical examples, like Nehru's engagement with opposition leaders, demonstrate the value of respectful parliamentary discourse.
  - **Opportunity for Normalcy:** The large opposition presents an opportunity to restore normalcy and constructive debate in Parliament.

### Opposition's larger demography, LoP's big responsibility

The 2024 general election is historic in as much as it resulted in the numerically largest Opposition in the Lok Sabha. It is perhaps the largest in the history of the House. With the Opposition securing over 234 seats, one also saw the debate on the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) come alive. In the 10th and 17th Lok Sabhas, there was no LoP because under a direction of the Speaker issued in the 1950s, in order to get recognition as a party in the House, it should have a minimum of 10% members in that House (Direction 121).

This direction was issued for the recognition and categorisation of parliamentary parties for the sake of providing them certain facilities in Parliament. But this direction does not deal with the recognition of the LoP. Later, Parliament enacted the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977, which for the first time, defined the term Leader of the Opposition as "the Leader in that House of the party in opposition to the Government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the House of the People, as the case may be".

The definition shows that in order to recognise a person as LoP, there are two conditions that need to be fulfilled. First, the party should be numerically the biggest one in opposition to the government. Second, that party should be recognised by the Speaker as a party. As mentioned earlier, the Speaker can recognise a party as such only if it has 10% of the strength of the House. In other words, only a party which has 10% of the strength of the House can put forth its claim to the post of LoP. Under the direction cited, a party which has less than 10% members shall be categorised as a group which cannot claim the post of LoP. Thus, the Congress parliamentary party which had only 52 members, in 2009, in the Lok Sabha, two less than 54 which is the threshold, could not get this post.

However the enactment of the 10th Schedule has, in a way, rendered the categorisation of parties into parties and groups by the Speaker/Chairman Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha irrelevant. Under this schedule, all political parties, irrespective of the number of Members that they have in the Houses, are "parties". The term "group" is not recognised by the Schedule. So, in tune with the Schedule, necessary changes in the Leaders of Opposition Act should have been made to enable the Speaker to recognise the leader of the largest Opposition party in the House, irrespective of whether it has 10% Members or not. Anyway, the leader of the Congress party is now the Leader of the Opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha.

**In the Westminster system**  
The post of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha has great political significance. In the British parliamentary tradition, he is called the Prime Minister-in-waiting as he is the one who the



**Ravi Shankar Prasad**  
Speaker, Lok Sabha

king turns to when the incumbent government falls, to form an alternative government. He, therefore, forms a shadow cabinet of his colleagues in his party. It is an interesting feature of the Westminster system of government.

The shadow cabinet is formed under the leadership of the leader of opposition who will be called the shadow prime minister. According to this tradition, the shadow cabinet scrutinises the policies and actions of the government and offers alternative policy. It is called the shadow cabinet because its members mirror the positions of the individual members of the real cabinet. As members of the shadow cabinet, these Opposition members familiarise themselves fully with the operations of the government. They can seek all relevant information about the entire gamut of the activities of the government. Enkine May, an international authority on parliamentary system says, "The Leader of the Opposition and some of the Leader's principal colleagues in both Houses form a group, known as 'the Shadow Cabinet', each member of which is given a particular range of activities on which it is their task to direct criticism of the Government's policy and administration and to outline alternative policies."

Although we have adopted the Westminster system, the practice of forming a shadow cabinet does not exist in Parliament or State legislatures. The post of the Leader of the Opposition in the Indian Parliament has been a statutory position since 1977. However, this statute does not define the functions of the Leader of the Opposition. Traditionally, he will be a very senior member of the principal Opposition in the House who commands great respect and has wider acceptability among the parties in the Opposition.

**With change in 2024, the challenges**  
Since the Opposition is the Indian Parliament is not monolithic and is composed of multiple parties with divergent ideologies and programmes, the role of the Leader of the Opposition is full of challenges. The biggest problem he faces is that he has no power. It is easy for a party in power to attract other parties and keep the alliance together through a power-sharing arrangement. The opposition to the policies and programmes of the government is a major factor which keeps them together. In certain situations, the hope of bringing down the government acts as a unifying factor. In fact, the traditional role of the Opposition is to "oppose the government, to criticise it and to seek to replace it".

In the past 10 years, the Lok Sabha has seen a rather lean Opposition which could not mount any serious challenge to the government. A large majority enjoyed by the ruling party and its intimidatory postures overawed the Opposition which often felt helpless. But the 2024 general election has brought about a sea change in the political atmosphere and the demography of the

House. It is perhaps for the first time that the Lok Sabha has such a large number in the Opposition. With over 234 Members in the Opposition benches, the House is almost evenly divided. This has, no doubt, boosted the morale of the Opposition which, to a great extent, can influence the running of the House. It would be reflected in the admission of questions, the content of the answers, debate on Bills, general debates such as the debate on the motion of thanks, urgent matters of public interest, admission of adjournment motions, and reference of Bills to the committees for detailed scrutiny, to name a few.

The Leader of the Opposition should be able to capture this new mood of the Opposition and present his views in the House in the most effective way. The LoP of the 18th Lok Sabha has the onerous task of serving the unity of the Opposition at all costs. As the prime minister in waiting, he has the responsibility to inform the nation about the failures of the government based on truth and with a great sense of responsibility. In the House he has primacy in debates and other interventions. It is the well-accepted parliamentary tradition that the Speaker permits the Leader of the Opposition to make interventions on any matter without any notice. He can demand the presence of the Prime Minister in the House when it debates serious issues. According to the British tradition, the Prime Minister directly informs the Leader of the Opposition about major policy initiatives. Thus, the channel of communication between the Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition is always kept open.

**The past has lessons**  
In India too, this healthy tradition can be followed, which will certainly strengthen democracy. Jawaharlal Nehru had created certain traditions such as being present in the House during Question Hour on most of the dates and supplementing the replies given by Ministers whenever he felt that such replies were inadequate. Nehru is said to have pleaded with the Speaker to grant more time to the leaders of the Opposition and he would invariably be present in the House to listen to them. He used to say that it is only from the Opposition members that he would come to know about the real situation in the country, and not from his own party members who would only praise him and not speak the truth. The Indian Parliament evolved in its early stages in such an environment. There is much in the past which can be learned and emulated by the new generation of parliamentarians. Repudiation of the past will take us nowhere. Indifference towards dissent was never a part of that tradition. The people of India have given the political class a great opportunity to restore normalcy in Parliament. The main function of the Leader of the Opposition is to constantly remind the ruling benches of the need to normalise Parliament.

## 2. Harnessing India's Rooftop Solar Potential GS 3 (Economy)

- **Why in News:** India's installed rooftop solar (RTS) capacity has seen significant growth, with a record increase of 2.99 GW in 2023-2024. As of March 31, the total installed RTS capacity in India was 11.87 GW. This growth underscores the need for a sustained push to harness India's vast RTS potential to meet the rising energy demands.

## ● Key Highlights of the RTS Programme

- **Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission:** Launched in January 2010, aiming to produce 20 GW of solar energy by 2022, later revised to 100 GW with a 40 GW RTS component.
- **Current Status:** As of December 2022, India had installed 7.5 GW of RTS capacity, extending the 40 GW target to 2026. The overall RTS potential is approximately 796 GW.
- **Future Targets:** To achieve 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030, with 280 GW from solar, RTS must contribute around 100 GW.

## ● State-wise Performance

- **Gujarat:** Leading with an installed RTS capacity of 3,456 MW, attributed to quick approval processes, a large number of installers, and high consumer awareness.
- **Maharashtra:** Following with 2,072 MW, driven by robust policies and a conducive regulatory environment.
- **Rajasthan:** Boasts the highest RTS potential (1,154 MW) due to its land area and high solar irradiance, supported by streamlined approvals and financial incentives.
- **Other States:** Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka have also performed well, while Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand face challenges like bureaucratic hurdles and lack of infrastructure.

## ● Challenges and Solutions

- **Economic Viability:** Government subsidies and low-cost financing options are crucial. Increasing the number of financial institutions offering RTS loans can make these systems more accessible.
- **Technological Advancements:** Promoting R&D in solar technology, energy storage solutions, and smart-grid infrastructure can reduce costs and improve system reliability.
- **Skill Development:** Training programs like 'Suryamitra' can build a skilled workforce to support the growing RTS sector.
- **Regulatory Framework:** Updating net-metering regulations, grid-integration standards, and building codes is essential to address emerging challenges and facilitate smooth implementation.

## ● Implications on Energy Security

- **Energy Independence:** Expanding RTS can reduce dependence on fossil fuels, enhancing India's energy security.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Increased use of solar energy can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change.
- **Economic Growth:** Developing the RTS sector can create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and provide reliable power to underserved areas.

## ● Need for Equity in Solarification

- **Inclusive Growth:** Ensuring equitable access to RTS systems across urban and rural areas can bridge the energy divide.
- **Support for Marginalized Communities:** Providing targeted subsidies and incentives can help marginalized communities adopt RTS, ensuring they benefit from renewable energy advancements.

## ● PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana scheme

- **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana** is a government scheme that aims to provide free electricity to households in India.
- **Financial assistance:** The scheme provides a **Central Financial Assistance** of 60 percent of system cost for 2 kW systems and 40 percent of additional system cost for systems between 2 to 3 kW capacity.
- **Beneficiaries of scheme** will get free electricity of up to 300 units per month. It could result in savings of Rs 15,000-18,000 annually for households that install rooftop solar systems.
- **National Portal:** Households will apply for subsidy through the National Portal and will be able to select a suitable vendor for installing rooftop solar.
- **Model village:** Under the scheme, 'A Model Solar Village' will be developed in each district of the country to act as a role model for adoption of rooftop solar in rural areas.

## How well is India tapping its rooftop solar potential?

Which are the States with the highest RTS capacities? How can more awareness be spread?

Shantanu Ray

**The story so far:** India's installed rooftop solar (RTS) capacity increased by 2,591 GW in 2023-2024, the highest growth in a year. As of March 31, the total installed RTS capacity in India was 11.87 GW, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. To meet rising energy demand, India needs to double down on its efforts to expand its RTS potential.

**What is the RTS programme?** India launched the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission in January 2010. Its main objective was to produce 20 GW of solar energy (including RTS) in three phases: 2010-2013, 2013-2017, and 2017-2022. In 2025, the government revised this target to 100 GW by 2022, including a 40 GW RTS component, with yearly targets for each State and Union Territory. In December 2022, India had an installed RTS capacity of 7.5 GW and extended the deadline for the 40-GW

target to 2026. While financial incentives, technological advances, awareness, and training have improved RTS installation numbers, there is a long way to go. India's overall RTS potential is approximately 796 GW. To meet India's target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy capacity, with a solar component of 280 GW, by 2030, RTS alone needs to contribute about 100 GW by 2030.

**How are States faring?** As of March 31, 2024, the RTS capacities of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan had taken big strides while some others were behind the curve. An installed RTS capacity of 3,456 MW in Gujarat is the result of its government's quick approval process, a large number of RTS installers, and high consumer awareness. Similarly, Maharashtra, with an RTS capacity of 2,072 MW, is one of the top-performing States owing to its robust solar policies and conducive regulatory environment.

Thanks to its land area and high solar irradiance, Rajasthan boasts of the

highest RTS potential in the country, 1,154 MW. In efforts to streamline approvals, provide financial incentives, and promote RTS through public-private partnerships, have spurred this growth.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, with respective installed capacities of 675, 580, and 584 MW, have also performed reasonably well. However, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, among others, are yet to fully explore their RTS potential.

Their challenges include bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of public awareness. The Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana is a flagship initiative to fit one crore households with RTS systems and help them get up to 300 units of free electricity every month. An average system size of 2 kW for targeted households will result in a total RTS capacity addition of 20 GW. The scheme has a financial outlay of ₹5,021 crore, which includes financial assistance for consumers (₹5,700 crore), incentives for distribution companies (₹4,500 crore),

incentives for local bodies and model solar villages in each district, payment security mechanisms, capacity building (₹657 crore), and awareness and outreach (₹657 crore). The scheme also encourages the adoption of advanced solar technologies, energy storage solutions, and smart grid infrastructure.

### THE GIST

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As of March 31, 2024, the RTS capacities of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan had taken big strides while some others were behind the curve. An installed RTS capacity of 3,456 MW in Gujarat is the result of its government's quick approval process, a large number of RTS installers, and high consumer awareness.

Creating awareness is key to getting consumers on board. In addition, RTS needs to be economically viable for households.

As the scheme's implementation enters full swing, net metering regulations, grid integration standards, and building codes should be reviewed and updated to help address emerging challenges and facilitate smooth implementation.

Shantanu Ray works with the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy.



### 3. Impact of Coal Mining Pollutants on Workers

#### GS 2 (Social Issues)

- **Why in the News:** Prolonged exposure to coal mining pollutants has resulted in widespread respiratory and skin diseases among the workers and people in six districts in India, where coal extraction is a major occupation.
- **About the Study:**
  - A survey was conducted by the **National Foundation for India** which is an organisation that works on social justice issues.
  - It conducted a survey, involving 1,200 households, to study the prolonged exposure to coal mining pollutants on the mining workers.
  - The six districts covered for the survey were Koriya and Raigarh (**Chhattisgarh**), Dhanbad and Ramgarh (**Jharkhand**), Angul and Jajpur (**Odisha**).
  - The surveys, on average, spanned 18-20 villages per district.
- **Key Findings of the Study:**
  - **Impact on Marginalised Communities:**
    - ◆ It was found that 81.5 per cent among those surveyed belonged to the marginalised SC, ST, and OBC communities and the rest were from the general category.
    - ◆ The survey found lower levels of income and educational attainment among SC and ST groups compared to OBC groups, and their higher representation in low-paying, irregular jobs in coal-dumping yards, coal sidings, coal loading, coal transport, coal washeries and other informal work.
    - ◆ This disparity, the report said, indicated the **challenges that marginalised groups will face as India gradually phases down coal use**, resulting in significant job losses and economic downturns in coal-dependent regions.
  - **Impact on Health:**
    - ◆ People living closer to the mines were relatively more vulnerable.
    - ◆ Dhanbad and Ramgarh, which had more people living in such zones, had higher incidence of lung and breathing-related diseases as well as skin infections.
    - ◆ At least 65% of participants interviewed reported issues such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, and skin ailments such as eczema, dermatitis and fungal infections.
    - ◆ On average, a household in these districts spent ₹300 to ₹1,000 on monthly medical-related bills.
    - ◆ The average annual hospitalization expenses in Dhanbad (₹28,461 per household) were the highest.
  - **Shift from Coal:**
    - ◆ The main goal of the study was to explore the concept of a 'just transition' – finding effective and sensitive ways to help individuals who depend on coal mining to move away from these jobs.
    - ◆ As the world moves away from coal, significant job losses and economic declines are anticipated in coal-dependent regions.
    - ◆ This shift will affect not only coal miners and workers directly but also the wider local economy.
- **India's Dependence on Coal for Energy Supply:**
  - While renewable energy capacity is dramatically increasing, **coal still provides around 70 per cent of the country's electricity**.
  - Coal is expected to **account for at least 21 per cent of India's electricity requirements even by 2050**.

### Prolonged exposure to coal mining causes respiratory, skin diseases in workers: study

Jacob Keshy  
NEW DELHI

Prolonged exposure to pollutants from coal mining has resulted in widespread respiratory and skin diseases among mine workers and other inhabitants of six districts in India where coal extraction is a major occupation, says a survey of 1,200 households published by the National Foundation for India, an organisation that works on social justice issues.

The six districts are Koriya and Raigarh (Chhattisgarh), Dhanbad and Ramgarh (Jharkhand), Angul and Jajpur (Odisha).

**Medical expenses**  
At least 65% of the participants interviewed reported health issues such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, and skin ailments such as eczema, dermatitis and



**Unmindful of the risk:** Workers at an open-cast coal mine in Jharkhand, on the outskirts of Dhanbad in Jharkhand, are

fungal infections. On an average, a household in these districts spent ₹300 to ₹1,000 on monthly medical bills.

The average annual hospitalization expenses in Dhanbad were the highest at ₹28,461 for a household. The survey, on an average, spanned 18 to 20 villages in each district.

People living closer to

the mines are relatively more vulnerable. Dhanbad and Ramgarh, which have more people living in such zones, have higher incidence of lung and breathing-related diseases and skin infections.

**Shift from coal**  
The broader thrust of the study was to investigate a 'just transition' – or how

those who are directly dependent on coal mining may be effectively and sensitively transitioned from these jobs.

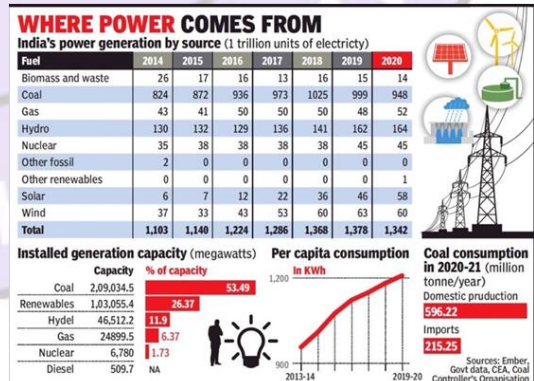
The world's shift away from coal is expected to result in significant job losses and economic downturn in coal-dependent regions. This will impact not only the coal miners and workers directly but also the broader local economy.

"Social and economic disparities were evident across districts, with varying income levels and irregular wage receipt patterns," said Pooja Gupta, co-author of the study and research associate at the NFI.

"Dhanbad (Jharkhand) and Koriya (Chhattisgarh) are solely reliant on coal production, and reported lower incomes than the more diversified industrial districts like Angul (Odisha)," she said in a press statement.

**Renewable energy**  
While India has committed to source nearly 500 GW of electricity – nearly half its projected installed capacity for 2030 – from renewable energy sources, coal is expected to be the mainstay of power generation in India for decades.

Nearly half of India's installed power generation capacity, or about 205 GW, are coal-powered thermal plants. Change, however, is in the air as renewable energy accounted for 71.5% of the record 13.6 GW power generation capacity added by India for the first time in the January-March quarter this year, while coal's share, including lignite, of the total power capacity dropped below 50% for the first time since the 1960s.



### ■ Easily Available Source of Power:

- ◆ Coal can help the country meet its energy needs without depending on imports as it is abundantly available domestically.
- ◆ Alternatives like nuclear energy have been hampered by high costs and safety concerns.

### ■ India's Developmental Needs:

- ◆ To lift millions of people out of poverty, India needs energy.
- ◆ The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** predicts that between 2020 and 2040, India will have the largest growth in energy demand of any country in the world.
- ◆ To meet this demand, India will need to rely on a variety of energy sources—both conventional and renewable.

### ■ Source of Employment:

- ◆ Beyond providing desperately needed energy, **coal is also a vital source of jobs and economic growth and a driver of industrialization**, just as it was in developed countries.
- ◆ Around **4 million people in India are employed either directly or indirectly in the coal sector**.
- ◆ Other than active workers, another 500,000 Indians rely on the coal sector for their pensions.

### ■ Source of Revenue for the Government:

- ◆ Coal India Limited is the largest coal mining company in the world.
- ◆ The coal sector is a major source of revenue for States and the Central Government.

## 4. Chandrayaan-4

### GS 3 (Science and Tech)

- **Why in News:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing for its ambitious Chandrayaan-4 mission, aiming to bring back samples from the Moon. This mission involves unique challenges and innovative strategies, including assembling spacecraft parts in space.
- **Multi-Launch Strategy and In-Space Assembly**
  - **Multiple Launches:** Unlike previous missions, Chandrayaan-4 will be launched in multiple parts due to the spacecraft's size exceeding the carrying capacity of ISRO's most powerful rocket. The components will be assembled in space before heading to the Moon.
  - **In-Space Docking:** This approach is similar to the construction of the International Space Station. It will be the first time a lunar mission adopts this method, potentially setting a new precedent in space exploration. ISRO is developing new docking capabilities to join spacecraft parts in both Earth and Moon orbits.
- **Technological Marvel and Testing**
  - **Spadex Mission:** To test the docking capabilities required for Chandrayaan-4, ISRO will conduct a mission called Spadex later this year. This mission will demonstrate in-space docking, a crucial step for the success of Chandrayaan-4.
  - **Configuration and Capabilities:** The configuration involves developing technologies to dock modules in space, which will be essential for future complex missions. A detailed study and internal review of the Chandrayaan-4 mission are complete, and cost estimates will soon be submitted for government approval.
- **Future Missions and Space Station Plans**
  - **Vision 2047:** ISRO's long-term vision includes plans for India's own space station by 2035 and sending humans to the Moon by 2040. The future Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) will also be assembled in space through multiple launches.
  - **Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV):** ISRO is developing the NGLV, a heavy rocket with an upgraded design to handle larger missions. A new launch complex is being created to accommodate this 4,000-ton rocket, essential for future missions.

### Chandrayaan-4 to be sent in parts, assembled in space: ISRO chief

ANONNA DUTT & AMITABH SINHA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

CHANDRAYAAN-4, WHICH is supposed to bring back samples from the Moon, would not be launched at one go and instead, different parts of the spacecraft would be sent into orbit through two launches, and the spacecraft would be assembled in space before proceeding to the Moon, ISRO Chairman Somanath said Wednesday.

The International Space Station and all previous similar facilities were built by assembling different parts in space. However, this would be probably the first time in the world that a spacecraft would be launched in parts and then assembled in space.

"...We have worked out the configuration of Chandrayaan-4... how to bring back samples from Moon to Earth. We propose to do it with multiple launches because our current rocket capability is not (strong) enough to do it at one go," Somanath said on the sidelines of an event in Delhi. "So, we have to have docking capability (joining of different parts of a spacecraft) in space — both in Earth space as well as in Moon space. We are developing that capability. We have a mission called Spadex scheduled later this year to demonstrate this capability," Somanath said.

Docking of spacecraft modules on the return journey from Moon is a fairly routine manoeuvre. A part of spacecraft detaches from the main spacecraft and makes a landing while the other part remains in the Moon orbit. When the landing part leaves the Moon's surface, it docks and links up with the orbiting part, becoming one unit again.

However, it would be the first instance of docking of modules in Earth orbit for the onward journey to the Moon. "We are not making any claims to be the first



ISRO Chairman S Somanath in New Delhi on Wednesday.

one to attempt this, but yes, I am not aware of anyone else having done this so far," Somanath said. Somanath said that a detailed study, internal review and cost for the Chandrayaan-4 mission have been worked out which will be sent to the government for approval. This is one of the four project proposals that the space agency plans seek approval for in line with its Vision 2047, which has envisioned India building its own space station by 2035 and sending humans to the Moon by 2040.

India's space station, named Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), would also be set up by carrying different parts of the infrastructure in multiple launches.

"The first segment of the BAS can be launched using the (current) LV-M3 rocket as it is the only rocket available today and we have decided that by 2028 we should have the first launch of the BAS. For this, we are preparing another proposal for government approval," Somanath said.

He said details of other modules of the BAS will be worked out in due course. "We have a five module configuration, multiple committees are working on how to develop this," he said.



## ● Impact and Future Directions

- **Enhanced Capabilities:** These innovative strategies and missions demonstrate ISRO's capability to handle complex space missions, positioning India as a significant player on the global stage.
- **Technological Advancement:** Developing and testing in-space docking and assembly will advance India's space technology, enabling more ambitious missions in the future.
- **Global Collaboration and Competition:** Success in these missions will not only boost India's reputation in space exploration but also open avenues for international collaboration and competition

## 5. Role of a Lok Sabha's Leader of Opposition

### GS 2 (Legislature)

#### ● Why in News:

- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the 18th Lok Sabha, a position that lay vacant for 10 years because no party had numbers equalling a tenth of the strength of the House.
- **The LoP is the parliamentary chairperson of the largest political party/ coalition in the Lok Sabha that is not in government.**

#### ● The Position of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha:

##### ■ Statutory recognition:

- ◆ It was officially described in the **Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act 1977.**
- ◆ The Act describes the Leader of Opposition as:

- A member of the Council of States or the House of the People (as the case may be),
- Who is the Leader in that House of the party (having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman/ the Speaker) in opposition to the Government.

##### ■ Numerical strength: According to a conventional understanding, in order to get the post of Leader of Opposition a party must have at least 10% of MPs in the House.

##### ■ Debate over numerical strength:

- ◆ According to the former Lok Sabha Secretary General PDT Achary, the law is clear that the Speaker is required to recognise the leader of the **numerically largest party** in opposition as the leader of opposition.
- ◆ **There is no such rule**, which requires a party to have at least 10% of the members of the House for recognising someone as the Leader of the Opposition.
- ◆ Before the BJP in 2014 and 2019, the Congress (having 415 members in Lok Sabha) in 1984 denied TDP (with 30 MPs) the post of Leader of Opposition, on the basis of the above mysterious rule.

##### ■ Salary and sumptuary allowances: S/he shall be entitled to receive a salary and allowances as are specified in the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act 1954.

#### ● Powers of the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the House:

##### ■ Order of precedence: The LoP in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha come at No. 7, along with

- ◆ Union Cabinet Ministers,
- ◆ The National Security Advisor,
- ◆ The Principal Secretary to the PM,
- ◆ The Vice-Chairperson of the NITI Aayog,
- ◆ Former PMs, and Chief Ministers.

##### ■ Sitting position in the House:

- ◆ **The LoP sits in the front row** to the left of the Chair, and enjoys **certain privileges on ceremonial occasions** like escorting the Speaker-elect to the rostrum (Chair of the Speaker).
- ◆ The LoP is also entitled to a seat in the front row during the Address by the President to both Houses of Parliament.

### Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha: the position, role, responsibilities

**ADARSHMAN**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Rahul Gandhi (NDA) is the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, a position that lay vacant for 10 years because no party had numbers equalling a tenth of the strength of the House, which has been in practice since 1977.

The Congress, the largest opposition party, won 44 and 52 seats in the 543-member House after the elections of 2014 and 2019 respectively. The party has almost doubled its 2014 vote share in the election.

In 2014, Mulayam Singh Yadav — who is now Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha — was recognised as the leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha. In 2019, this position went to N. Chandrababu Naidu (TDP) after Rajiv Gandhi (BJP). Both Congress leaders were part of a pact to select candidates to high positions that required the presence of the Leader of Opposition.

**What is the role of the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha?**

The position of Leader of Opposition is officially described in the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.

The Act describes the Leader of Opposition as a member of the Council of States or the House of the People (as the case may be), who is the Leader in that House of the party (having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the House of the People).

In an article written for the Indian Express in May 2017, former Lok Sabha Secretary General PDT Achary said: "The law is clear that the Speaker is required to recognise the leader of the numerically largest party in opposition as the leader of opposition. The option of recognising someone else is not available."

Achary, however, rejected the conventional understanding that to get the post of Leader of Opposition, a party must have at least 10% of 543 seats in the House. He wrote: "A mysterious rule is often quoted by some self-styled experts, which requires a party to have at least 10% of the members of the House for the Speaker to recognise someone as the Leader of the Opposition. There is no such rule. We have in fact 121 members in the House, and the Speaker has recognised the Congress party in 2014 and 2019 on the basis of its numerical strength, not on the basis of 10% of the House's strength."

This direction relates to the recognition of a party, and not the Leader of Opposition.

Before the BJP in 2014 and 2019, the Congress, which had 415 members in Lok Sabha in 1984, had denied the TDP, which had 30 MPs, the post of Leader of Opposition.

**What position does the Leader of Opposition have in the House?**

The Leader of Opposition sits in the front row to the left of the Chair, and enjoys certain privileges on ceremonial occasions like escorting the Speaker-elect to the rostrum.

The Leader of Opposition also receives a seat in the front row during the Address by the President to both Houses of Parliament.

**EXPLAINED POLITICS**

Since the parliamentary system is based on "trust and confidence", the Leader of Opposition is the Minister who is in charge of the Government's business in the House. He is the Minister who is in charge of the Government's business in the House. He is the Minister who is in charge of the Government's business in the House.

**responsibility does the Leader of Opposition have?**

Most importantly, the Leader of Opposition is the opposition's representative in the high-powered committees headed by the Prime Minister for appointments to key posts in the Government, the Central Vigilance Commission and the Central Information Commission, the Chartered Accountants, and the National Human Rights Commission, and the National Commission for Women.

As the Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, Mr. Gandhi has already argued that the government is not only responsible for the opposition but also for the selection of the Leader of Opposition.

In order of precedence, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha come at No. 7, along with Union Cabinet Ministers, the National Security Advisor, the Principal Secretary to the PM, the Vice-Chairman of the NITI Aayog, former PMs, and Chief Ministers.

**IN THE PAST IN THE PAST**

**SUSHMA SWARAJ**  
(DEC 2009 TO MAY 2014)

**L. KADWANI**  
(MAY 2007 TO DEC 2009)

**SONA GANDHI**  
(DEC 1989 TO FEB 2004)

**SHARAD PAWAR**  
(MAY 1984 TO MAY 1989)

**ATUL BHARVAJ**  
(JUN 1987 TO DEC 1989)

**RAJIV GANDHI**  
(DEC 1980 TO DEC 1989)

**■ The main duty of the LoP:**

- ◆ It is to **serve as the voice of the opposition** in the House and is considered as a **shadow Prime Minister with a shadow Cabinet**.
- ◆ This means, s/he is **ready to take over the administration** if the Government resigns or is defeated on the floor of the House.
- ◆ Because the parliamentary system is based on "**mutual forbearance**" (acknowledging that we do not all have to agree on everything), the LoP is free to disagree while yet allowing the PM to rule.
- ◆ **His/her proactive role** in facilitating smooth functioning of the business of the House is as important as that of the Government.

**■ Practical role and responsibility:**

- ◆ Most importantly, the LoP is the **opposition's representative in the high-powered committees** headed by the PM for appointment to key posts such as
  - The Director of CBI,
  - The Central Vigilance Commissioner and Chief Information Commissioner,
  - The Chairperson and Members of the National Human Rights Commission, and
  - The Lokpal.
- ◆ S/he will also be a **member of crucial committees**, including Public Accounts, Public Undertakings, Estimates and several Joint Parliamentary Committees.

**MCQ Current Affairs****27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024**

**1. Kalibr cruise missile, recently seen in the news, was developed by which one of the following countries?**

- a) Iran
- b) Israel
- c) North Korea
- d) Russia

**2. Consider the following statements with reference to the Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance (TAPAS):**

- A. It is a medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) drone.
  - B. It was developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

**3. Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP), recently seen in the news, lies in which one of the following states?**

- a) Odisha
- b) West Bengal
- c) Chhattisgarh
- d) Karnataka

**4. Exercise HOPEX, recently in news, was held between India and:**

- a) Egypt
- b) Russia
- c) Japan
- d) Australia

**5. Consider the following statements with reference to the Space MAITRI mission:**

- A. It is an initiative between NewSpace India Limited and Australia.
  - B. It aims to foster closer ties between commercial, institutional, and governmental space organizations.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two



**Answers Current Affairs**  
**27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024**

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1. d
2. c
3. d
4. a
5. c

