

16th Sept, 2024

1. International Day of Democracy

Recent events of importance

- **Why in News:** Karnataka recently marked the 'International Day of Democracy' by forming a 'historic' 2,500-km-long human chain as a symbol of equality, unity, fraternity, and participative governance.

- **About International Day of Democracy:**

- It is an annual celebration observed on September 15.
- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) established this day in 2007 to emphasise the global significance of democracy.
- It serves as a reminder that democracy is not merely a fixed condition, but an ongoing pursuit.
- It calls for active engagement from international organizations, nation-states, civil society, and people to pursue the democratic idea.

Day of Democracy



Dasara elephants join a function in front of the Mysuru Palace on Sunday to mark the International Day of Democracy, M.A. SRIRAM

- **History:**
 - The International Day of Democracy was accredited by the UNGA on November 8, 2007, by passing a resolution entitled "Support by United Nations system of efforts of governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies."
 - September 15 was chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Universal Declaration on Democracy, which was adopted in Geneva on September 15, 1997.
- This declaration outlines the tenets of democracy, proclaiming that democracy is "a system of government based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social, and cultural systems and their full participation, through free and fair periodic elections, in the composition of their representative government."
- After the Universal Declaration on Democracy, Qatar spearheaded the campaign to observe an International Day of Democracy at the United Nations.
- The first-ever International Day of Democracy was held in 2008.

- **Key Facts about the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU):**

- IPU is the international organization of Parliaments.
- It was established in 1889 in Paris to promote representative democracy and world peace.
- The IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy, and sustainable development around the world.
- It was the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations.
- Slogan: "For democracy. For everyone"
- Today, the IPU comprises 179 member parliaments and 13 associate members.

2. A Human Touch to India's Mineral Ecosystem

Recent events of importance

• Why in News:

- The higher judiciary's intervention in 2014 and the subsequent amendment of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act by the Modi government in 2015 marked the beginning of a transformative era in resource management.

- One of the most significant outcomes of this reform was the creation of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs).

- Therefore, it is important to delve into the journey of DMFs, highlighting their role in community-centric development, innovation, and cooperative federalism.

• The Genesis of District Mineral Foundations

- The introduction of DMFs was driven by the PM Modi's vision of empowering local communities, recognising them as key stakeholders in the country's resource-led development.

- The 2015 amendment to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act mandated the creation of DMFs in mining districts, funded through contributions from licensees and leaseholders.

- This initiative was not just a legal or financial reform but a shift in the government's approach toward resource management.

- By linking mineral extraction with community welfare, DMFs aimed to turn a historically exploitative sector into one that supports long-term sustainable livelihoods for affected communities.

• The Transformation and Achievements of DMFs

- From Losses to Community-Centric Development

- The transformation of India's mineral wealth management, exemplified by DMFs, has been nothing short of remarkable.
- Prior to the establishment of DMFs in 2015, the allocation of mining rights had resulted in substantial losses to the national exchequer, as highlighted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in 2012.
- Between 2004 and 2009, mismanagement and the lack of transparency in the allocation of coal blocks led to significant financial discrepancies, depriving the country of crucial revenue.
- The DMFs were established with the core objective of compensating the communities most affected by mining operations.
- Over the past decade, this initiative has led to the accumulation of an impressive corpus of nearly ₹1 lakh crore, which has funded a wide array of projects aimed at improving the lives of local populations.

- Creation of a Financial Corpus for Local Development

- The corpus generated through DMF contributions represents a major financial achievement.
- This fund has empowered district administrations in mineral-rich states to undertake projects that address the pressing needs of their communities, many of which have been marginalized or underserved for decades.
- With a total of ₹1 lakh crore, DMFs have financed over three lakh projects across 645 districts in 23 states.

- Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)

- The central mechanism through which DMFs operate is the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY), a scheme that provides the framework for DMF-funded projects.
- The PMKKKY has a dual mandate: to minimise the negative impacts of mining on local populations and to ensure that affected communities can secure sustainable livelihoods in the long run.

A human touch to India's mineral ecosystem

In the year 2014, the higher judiciary turned the spotlight on the allotment of coal blocks with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's report of 2012 focusing on the allocation of coal blocks between 2004 and 2009.

In 2015, the Narendra Modi government amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act mandating the creation of DMFs. As a part of the Bill, the government created a new body in the form of a District Mineral Foundation (DMF) where licensees and leaseholders pay the DMF a certain amount of the royalty. This was driven by the Prime Minister's firm belief that local communities are the key stakeholders in the nation's natural resource-led development.

A transformation

Today, ten years later, the DMF has received a corpus of almost ₹1 lakh crore through which decentralised community-centric development works are carried out in mining affected districts. The journey from huge losses in 2012 to the national exchequer to an almost ₹1 lakh crore corpus in the DMF is a transformation worth narrating. September 14 is District Mineral Foundation Day as the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) scheme enters its tenth year. Today, the DMFs have resulted in three lakh projects being sanctioned across 645 districts in 23 states, transforming mineral wealth into a lifeline for development in mining affected regions. The objective in the PMKKKY is to implement developmental and welfare projects/programmes in mining affected areas alongside existing schemes/projects of State and central governments, minimising the impacts of mining on the people in mining districts and ensuring that those affected have long-term sustainable livelihoods.

At a recent DMF Gallery launch in New Delhi, I had the privilege of meeting some talented women from self-help groups set up by DMFs in Odisha. These women were not just artisans but



K. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Coal and Mines, represents the 'socialised Lok Sabha Parliamentary constituency'.

were also entrepreneurs in the making. In Katni, Madhya Pradesh, DMFs are helping young minds master drone technology. Many have landed jobs and others are gearing up for new opportunities. In India's rapidly evolving mining landscape, where we have just launched the National Critical Minerals Mission to secure our footing in strategic and critical minerals and are expanding our global footprint through our international public sector unit, Kishan Bhoosh India Ltd (KBIL), DMFs complement this goal through the welfare of the local communities in mining areas. DMFs institutionalise this strategy by making State government active partners and stand as a veritable picture of the philosophy of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Progress'.

With a District Collector at the helm, funds flow to where the needs are greatest. The 'National DMF Portal' digitises the administration and the oversight of DMFs across India, enabling greater transparency and efficiency in operations. DMFs are not only spearheading national priorities but also supplementing efforts of the district administration in improving the socio-economic and human development indicators of the region.

Innovation at every DMF

It is also interesting to note how every DMF is innovating to maximise the impact of the initiative and devising strategies to address unique challenges and needs. For instance, some DMFs are ensuring inclusivity by including elected representatives in the governing bodies while some have non-elected members of gram sabhas as well. Some DMFs have also adopted measures such as establishing a dedicated engineering department and deputing personnel from the State Public Works Department to ensure the efficient implementation of projects.

Ensuring a well-planned outlook, DMFs are also challenging out a three-year plan to ensure targeted goal achievement. After studying these

various models, our aim now is to ensure that such best practices are standardised across all DMFs without taking away the local context and knowledge that resides within the district. These efforts will ensure that DMFs take up long-term and well-planned projects while avoiding the earlier fragmented approach.

To further integrate DMF operations, we are encouraging district administrations to dovetail the activities and goals of the DMFs with ongoing central and State schemes in aspirational districts and supplement efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We are also aiming to use DMFs to augment the livelihood of forest dwellers by taking up projects in the plantation, collection and processing of medicinal herbs. The DMFs will also identify and nurture rural artisans while developing sports infrastructure and facilities. DMFs, in short, can be seen as an extension of the government's 'whole of government' approach, and will continue to be leveraged to reach out to the impacted communities.

Advantage of convergence

The DMFs are a fine example of cooperative federalism and have the unique advantage of converging central and State schemes. Aligning goals and resources at these levels of governance ensures that national priorities meet local needs and amplify the impact and reach. Moving forward with a 'whole of government' approach, DMFs are ensuring that India truly achieves inclusive governance, reaching every corner of the nation. By tapping into India's mineral wealth, these initiatives are transforming historically underserved regions, turning natural resources into drivers of local development. Beyond just empowering marginalised communities, India is rethinking how the world thinks about resource management, setting an example of how nations must balance economic growth with social welfare and rights.

Each District Mineral Foundation embodies cooperative federalism and is an example of how economic growth is being balanced with local welfare and rights.

- **DMF-funded projects under this scheme complement existing State and central government programs**, thereby amplifying the impact of developmental efforts.
- **Impact on Skill Development and Employment**
 - One of the most significant achievements of DMFs has been **their role in skill development and employment generation**.
 - In many mining-affected districts, **DMFs have sponsored vocational training programs that equip local residents with new skills**, preparing them for jobs in emerging sectors.
 - For instance, in **Katni, Madhya Pradesh, DMFs have funded initiatives that train young people in drone technology**, a rapidly growing field with diverse applications across industries.
 - **This has provided local youth with access to job opportunities that were previously unavailable in their region**, helping to break the cycle of poverty and dependence on low-paying, unskilled labour.
- **Social, Economic and Environmental Impact of DMFs at Local Level**
 - **Development of Healthcare Infrastructure**
 - Another area where DMFs have made significant contributions is healthcare.
 - Mining-affected districts often face health challenges due to poor environmental conditions, such as air and water pollution, resulting from mining activities.
 - In response, **DMFs have invested in the construction and upgrading of healthcare facilities in these areas**.
 - This includes the establishment of hospitals, mobile health clinics, and the provision of clean drinking water systems.
 - By improving access to healthcare, **DMFs are addressing one of the most pressing needs of mining-affected populations**, many of whom suffer from chronic health conditions related to mining activities
 - **Education and Human Development**
 - Education has also been a key focus of DMF-funded projects. **Mining-affected districts often suffer from high levels of illiteracy and poor educational infrastructure**.
 - In response, **DMFs have funded the construction of schools, the provision of scholarships, and the training of teachers**.
 - **These efforts have led to improvements in educational outcomes** in several regions, ensuring that children from mining-affected communities have access to better opportunities in the future.
 - **Environmental Restoration and Sustainable Livelihoods**
 - In addition to social and economic development, **DMFs have also been instrumental in environmental restoration efforts**.
 - Mining has a significant environmental footprint, often leading to deforestation, soil erosion, and water contamination.
 - **DMFs have funded projects aimed at mitigating these environmental impacts, including afforestation programs, soil conservation projects, and water management initiatives**.
- **The Role of DMFs as Catalysts for Inclusive Growth, Cooperative Federalism and Convergence**
 - **The Role in Cooperative Federalism**
 - DMFs are a **prime example of cooperative federalism, functioning at the intersection of national, state, and local governance**.
 - This **multi-level alignment ensures that DMF initiatives are not isolated but complement broader State and central government schemes**, particularly in aspirational districts.
 - The **'National DMF Portal'** further enhances this cooperation by digitising the administration and oversight of DMF projects, leading to greater transparency and efficiency.
 - **DMFs as Catalysts for Growth**
 - The **ongoing evolution of DMFs shows their potential as powerful tools for inclusive governance and resource management**.
 - By converging national and local priorities, **DMFs are ensuring that the benefits of India's mineral wealth reach those who need them the most**.

- This approach balances economic growth with social welfare, turning mineral-rich regions into hubs for community-driven development.

• **Way Forward**

- In the future, **the challenge will be to maintain the delicate balance between local innovation and the standardisation of best practices.**
- **By continuing to integrate DMF operations with broader government initiatives, such as the National Critical Minerals Mission, India can ensure that its mineral wealth contributes not only to economic growth but also to social equity and environmental sustainability.**

• **Conclusion**

- By placing local communities at the centre of resource-driven development, **DMFs have not only mitigated the negative effects of mining but have also provided new opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.**
- Through innovation, cooperation, and convergence, **DMFs represent a model for inclusive governance that can be scaled up across the country.**
- As India continues to tap into its vast mineral resources, **DMFs will remain crucial to ensuring that this wealth is used for the benefit of all, setting an example for resource management globally.**

3. Realising the Rural-Urban Continuum
GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** As India transitions to an urban-centric era due to significant demographic shifts, challenges arise in addressing infrastructure needs and governance across urban and rural areas. The existing policy frameworks and flagship programmes like **AMRUT and Swachh Bharat Mission** often fail to integrate the urban-rural continuum, leading to inefficiencies and inadequate infrastructure development.

• **Financial Decentralization and Constraints:**

- **Centralization Issues:** Recent years have seen over-centralization of finances, with local bodies facing severe financial constraints. The **13th Finance Commission** highlighted the "asphyxiation" of local bodies due to tied grants linked to central schemes.
- **Impact of Property Tax and GST:** The rise in property tax should ideally align with the **State Goods and Services Tax (SGST)** to prevent loss of tied grants. The disconnect between these components risks diminishing financial resources for towns. **Tied vs. Untied Grants:** Financial devolution has increasingly favored tied grants over untied ones, limiting the flexibility of
- local bodies and impacting their ability to address local needs effectively.

• **Issues with Existing Urban-Rural Programmes:**

- **AMRUT and Urban-Rural Continuum:** The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) targets urban infrastructure but excludes contiguous areas like census towns and urban villages, which are significant in the waste flow cycle.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission Limitations:** The Swachh Bharat Mission addresses solid and liquid waste management separately for urban and rural areas. This division creates inefficiencies, as integrated waste management solutions are needed for peri-urban and urban areas.
- **Missed Opportunities for Integration:** Both AMRUT and Swachh Bharat Mission could benefit from collaborative planning at the district level to address infrastructure needs more holistically and reduce bureaucratic centralization.

Realising the rural-urban continuum

This century is supposed to be India's urban century due not only to massive demographic shifts, with the country soon becoming more urban than rural, but also to the demand for the infrastructure required to support these large shifts. These demographic changes are occurring in Tier II and Tier III cities, as well as the peripheries of major urban centres and urban agglomerations. India addresses challenges by viewing them as either rural or urban; it needs to instead look at them as part of an urban-rural continuum.

Current policy framework
There has been an over-centralisation of finances in recent times. Financial decentralisation, which provides autonomy to local bodies, has been compromised. The 13th Finance Commission pointed out this issue by mentioning how local bodies were getting "asphyxiated".

Some of these financial constraints arise from the tied nature of grants linked to centrally sponsored schemes and even financial devolution. For example, the rise in property tax in cities should be commensurate with the rise in the State Goods and Services Tax. If there is no linkage, most towns are at risk of losing tied money grants, which have increased relative to untied grants over the years.

Flagship programmes such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), launched by successive National Democratic Alliance governments at the Centre, miss the urban-rural continuum. As far as urban infrastructure for liquid waste management is concerned, funding is proposed under AMRUT, which initially covered 500 cities but has now been extended to all statutory towns. However, these towns account for only a portion of the urban population. Many people live in census towns (with a minimum population of 5,000) and in the more than 23,000 urban villages. These areas are contiguous, with census towns adjoining statutory towns, and urban villages accommodating large numbers of migrant and informal workers. When urban infrastructure for liquid waste, such as sewage treatment plants, is designed, and funding is sought under AMRUT, these contiguous areas do not qualify for funding. The waste flow in these peri-urban areas does not adhere to urban-rural nomenclature, yet the planning process is obsessed with it. This issue has been a challenge for many States, particularly Kerala. NITI Aayog has pointed out that 50% of Kerala is urban. In such a situation, AMRUT grants cannot be utilised to create infrastructure.

AMRUT also does not support solid waste management infrastructure in urban areas. This falls under the Swachh Bharat Mission, which is now Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0. The goals of the Mission are twofold. For Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, the aim is to go beyond being open defecation-free to focusing on making urban India garbage-free and proposing sustainable solutions and practices for waste management. Similarly, Swachh Bharat Mission-Rural focuses on maintaining the open defecation-free status, managing solid and liquid waste in rural India, and constructing household toilets. It also addresses liquid waste management, which Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban does; however, treatment plants by the two cannot be built jointly.

Both these programmes, run by the Government of India, aim for nearly the same outcomes, so realising these through imaginative practices could yield better results. Solid waste management plants in peri-urban and urban areas could be designed collaboratively at the district or regional levels. Such liberty and autonomy will pave the way for better urban governance, rather than implementing programmes and projects from a centralised perspective.

Governance models
In this context, the framework established by the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments needs to be revisited and strengthened. It appears that three decades ago, there was more imaginative thinking in addressing such challenges than there is now. Under this framework, District Planning Committees comprising the 200 Panchayats and urban local bodies need to be strengthened and mobilised. While the intended governance model envisioned the district bureaucracy being subordinate to the District Planning Committee, at present, in most States, the District Planning Committees have become appendages of the district bureaucracy. Stronger District Planning Committees can help address the challenge of a urban-rural continuum.

During a conversation with the Minister for Local Self-Governments in Kerala, I learned that a proposed solid waste landfill site on the periphery of a town had to be withdrawn due to public pressure. This was possible only because both rural and urban local bodies fall under the same Ministry. In other States, this would have taken much longer.

Thus, the urban and rural continuum in rapidly expanding urban areas needs urgent interventions at both the infrastructure and governance levels. The previous models of separate urban and rural local bodies need to be updated in today's India, which is fast becoming urban. We need to question why finances and resources are provided in such a compartmentalised manner to urban and rural India, when the lines between the two are blurred. There must at least be some liberty in imaginatively designing plans in a joint manner.

• **Need for Governance Reforms:**

- **Constitutional Amendments:** The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** aimed to address urban and rural challenges but now require strengthening to better reflect contemporary needs.
- **District Planning Committees**, which should ideally lead planning and resource allocation, have often become extensions of district bureaucracy rather than autonomous entities.
- **Case Study of Kerala:** In Kerala, integrated management of urban and rural issues, such as the withdrawal of a landfill site due to combined local governance, demonstrates the benefits of unified oversight.

4. Typhoon Yagi - Asia's most powerful storm GS 3 (Disaster Management)

• **Why in News:**

- Typhoon Yagi, the strongest tropical cyclone in Asia this year and second only to Hurricane Beryl globally, has caused widespread devastation across Southeast Asia.
- Countries like the Philippines, China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand have been severely affected, but Vietnam has borne the brunt of the storm, with around 233 deaths. Torrential rains, floods, and landslides have added to the challenges faced by millions in the affected areas.

• **Tropical Cyclones**

○ **About**

- Cyclones that develop in the regions between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer are called tropical cyclones.
- The World Meteorological Organisation uses the term 'Tropical Cyclone' to cover weather systems in which winds exceed 'Gale Force' (minimum of 34 knots or 63 kph).
- Tropical cyclones are the progeny of ocean and atmosphere, powered by the heat from the sea; and driven by easterly trades and temperate westerlies, high planetary winds and their own fierce energy.

○ **Formation of cyclones**

- Tropical Cyclone is a **weather phenomenon**, which is formed **only over warm ocean waters near the equator**.

○ **Characteristics of a Tropical Cyclone:**

- The **centre of a cyclone is very calm and clear with very low air pressure**. The average speed is **120 kmph**.
- They have closed **isobars** which leads to greater velocity.
- Isobars are imaginary lines on a weather map that connect locations with equal atmospheric pressure.
- They develop over oceans and sea only
- They move from east to west under the influence of trade winds.
- They are seasonal in nature.

○ **Classification of cyclones**

- Cyclones are classified **on the basis of wind speed** by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD):
 - **Depression:** Wind speeds of between 31–49 km/h
 - **Deep Depression:** Between 50-61 km/h
 - **Cyclonic Storm:** Between 62–88 km/h
 - **Severe Cyclonic Storm:** Between 89-117 Km/h
 - **Very Severe Cyclonic Storm:** Between 118-166 Km/h

Behind Typhoon Yagi becoming the most powerful storm in Asia this year

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEWS DESK, SEPTEMBER 15

MILIONS of people in Southeast Asia continue to struggle with torrential rain, floods, and landslides triggered by Typhoon Yagi, the strongest tropical cyclone Asia has ever hit in the past and the second most powerful storm in the world to do anything after Hurricane Irene.

While Typhoon Yagi has severely impacted multiple countries, including the Philippines, China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, it has hit Vietnam the hardest, where the death toll stands at around 233. The overall toll across these countries has crossed 300 at that time.

EXPLAINED CLIMATE

How are tropical cyclones formed?
Tropical cyclones form over warm ocean waters near the equator. When the warm, moist air from the ocean surface rises upward, a lower air pressure area is formed below. Air from surrounding areas with higher air pressure rushes into this low pressure area, eventually rising, after it also becomes warm and moist.

As warm, moist air rises, it cools down, and the water in the air forms clouds and thunderstorms. This whole system of clouds and winds gains strength and momentum using the ocean's heat, and the water that evaporates from its surface.

The weakest tropical cyclones are called tropical depressions. If a depression intensifies such that its maximum sustained winds reach 34 knots per hour (63 kmph), the tropical cyclone becomes a tropical storm, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The next day, it became a Category 5 typhoon with peak maximum sustained winds of 233 kmph. Typhoon Yagi is one of four Category 5 storms recorded in the South China Sea, after Pamela in 1974, Rammasun in 2004, and Hai in 2022.

On September 16, it made landfall in China's Hainan province with winds of 223 kmph. The following day, Typhoon Yagi hit near Hainan, Guangdong province in northern Vietnam, one of the strongest storms the country has seen in more than a decade. The storm was later downgraded to a tropical depression but still brought heavy rain in countries such as Thailand and Laos.

How did Typhoon Yagi become the strongest storm in Asia?
Typhoon Yagi started as a tropical storm in the western Philippine Sea on September 11 and made landfall in the Philippines the next day and began to weaken. However, due to unusually warm waters in the South China Sea, the storm intensified again. By September 14, it strengthened into a typhoon with Category 3 winds.

The role of climate change?
Scientists are yet to reach an agreement over how exactly climate change is impacting tropical cyclones. That is because there are a lot of factors that determine whether a storm forms, how it develops, its strength, duration, and overall characteristics.

However, there is consensus that with rising global temperatures, tropical cyclones are becoming more intense. A study published in the journal *Current and Emerging Science* in July showed that tropical cyclones in Southeast Asia are now forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly, and lasting longer over land.

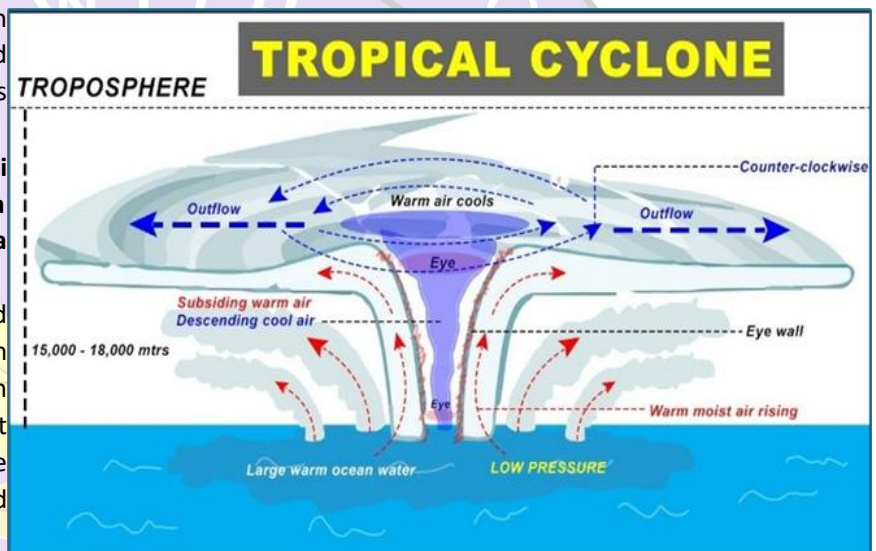
This is happening primarily because of warmer sea surface temperatures of the ocean. Higher sea surface temperatures cause evaporation of heat waves, an extreme weather event, which can also cause storm fluctuations and tropical cyclones over intense.

Warmer temperatures reduce the rate of evaporation along with the cooling of heat from the ocean to the air. When storms travel across hot oceans, they gather more water vapor and heat. This results in stronger winds, heavier rainfall and more flooding when storms reach the land.

People help a woman in a flooded area in Thailand on Friday, seen

(NCA) Storm systems with wind speeds of 119 kmph and above are classified as hurricanes, typhoons, or tropical cyclones. The category of a tropical cyclone is determined by its sustained wind speed, as measured by the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. It is classified into five categories - Category 1 to Category 5. While Category 1 tropical cyclones have winds of 119 to 153 kmph, Category 5 tropical cyclones, which are the strongest, have winds of 252 kmph or higher. Storms that reach Category 3 and higher are considered to be particularly dangerous due to their potential to inflict significant damage.

- **Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm:** Between 167-221 Km/h
 - **Super Cyclonic Storm:** Above 222 Km/h
- **Category of a tropical cyclone**
 - The category of a tropical cyclone is determined by its sustained wind speed, as measured by the **Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale**.
 - It is classified into five categories — Category 1 to Category 5.
 - While Category 1 tropical cyclones bring winds of 119 to 153 kmph, Category 5 tropical cyclones, which are the strongest, have winds of 252 kmph or higher.
 - Storms that reach Category 3 and higher are considered major tropical cyclones due to their potential to inflict significant damage.
- **Tropical cyclones are known by different names in various regions**
 - **Hurricanes** – In the in the West Indian islands in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean.
 - **Tornados** - In the Guinea lands of West Africa and southern USA
 - **Typhoons** – In the Northwest Pacific Ocean, particularly affecting East and Southeast Asia (e.g., Japan, Philippines, China, Taiwan).
 - **Cyclones** – In the Southwest Indian Ocean (off the coast of Africa, Madagascar), the Southeast Indian Ocean, and the Southwest Pacific Ocean.
 - **Willy-Willies** – An informal term used for tropical cyclones in Australia.
- **Reasons behind Typhoon Yagi becoming the strongest storm in Asia**
 - **Warm waters of South China Sea**
 - Typhoon Yagi started as a tropical storm in the western Philippine Sea. It made landfall in the Philippines and started to weaken.
 - However, due to unusually warm waters in the South China Sea, the storm intensified again.
 - Later, it became a Category 5 typhoon with peak maximum sustained winds of 260 kmph.
 - Typhoon Yagi is one of four Category 5 storms recorded in the South China Sea, after Pamela in 1954, Rammasun in 2014, and Rai in 2021.
 - The storm was subsequently downgraded to a tropical depression but still brought heavy rains last week in countries such as Myanmar, where it triggered severe floods around the remote capital, Naypyidaw.
 - **Role of climate change**
 - Scientists are still debating how climate change affects tropical cyclones, as many factors influence storm formation and development.
 - However, there is agreement that rising global temperatures are making tropical cyclones more intense.
 - A recent study suggests that in Southeast Asia, cyclones are now forming closer to coastlines, intensifying faster, and lingering longer over land.
 - This is likely due to warmer sea surface temperatures, which have increased by nearly 0.9°C since 1850.
 - Hotter oceans fuel storms with more water vapor and heat, leading to stronger winds, heavier rainfall, and increased flooding when storms make landfall.
- **Operation Sadbhav by India**



- India launched Operation Sadbhav to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) to Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam that have been hit by severe flooding caused by Typhoon Yagi.
- India has committed \$1mn worth of flood relief assistance to Vietnam and \$1,00,000 worth of assistance to Laos.
- India has been among the first responders in providing HADR to the region.
- This Operation is part of India's broader effort to contribute to HADR within the ASEAN region, in line with its longstanding Act East Policy.

5. One nation, one election to be implemented in this term GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** As per the government official, the concept of simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, referred to as "One Nation, One Election" will be implemented within the current term of the present government.
- **Simultaneous elections in India**
 - **About**
 - The concept of "One Nation, One Election" envisions a system in which all state and Lok Sabha elections must be held simultaneously.
 - This will entail restructuring the Indian election cycle so that elections to the states and the centre coincide.
 - This would imply that voters will vote for members of the LS and state assemblies on the same day and at the same time (or in a phased manner as the case may be).
 - **Various Committees on Simultaneous election**
 - The idea of returning to simultaneous elections was raised in the Election Commission's annual report in 1983.
 - It was also mentioned in the Law Commission's Report in 1999.
 - Following the reintroduction of the idea by PM Modi in 2016, the NITI Aayog prepared a working paper on the subject in 2017.
 - The Law Commission stated in its 2018 working paper that at least "five Constitutional recommendations" would be required to make simultaneous elections a reality in India again.
 - In June 2019, PM Modi said that a committee would be formed to examine the issue and a meeting with leaders of political parties would be called.
 - In July 2022, the issue of holding simultaneous Parliamentary and Assembly elections was referred to the 22nd Law Commission.
 - It recommended various steps in order to conduct simultaneous elections in India.
 - It also suggested the addition of a new chapter (Part XVA) on simultaneous polls in the Constitution.
- **High-level Committee (HLC) on One Nation, One Election**
 - The HLC, popularly known as the Kovind panel after its chairman, former President Ram Nath Kovind, was constituted in September 2023.
 - It was constituted to study the issues involving One Nation, One Election. It submitted its report in March 2024.
- **Key recommendations of the HLC**
 - **Simultaneous election by 2029**
 - The panel recommended amending the Constitution so that elections for the Lok Sabha, all state assemblies and local bodies can be held by 2029.
 - **Amending the Constitution**
 - The Constitution should be amended to enable simultaneous elections in two steps.
 - In all, 18 amendments to the Constitution and other statutes have been suggested.

100 DAYS OF NDA THIRD TERM

'One nation, one poll in this term; coalition won't stall reforms'

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 15

DESPITE THE BJP being in a minority, the NDA government will implement "one nation, one election," in its current tenure, a top government functionary said Sunday. This, even as he insisted that "there should be no confusion about the *sthaiyi miti* (policy stability) under a government elected for a third successive term after 60 years."

The functionary said that there is no area where the NDA

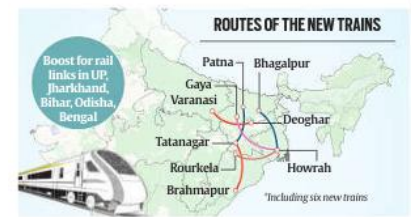
government, which completed 100 days of its third term Sunday, has not taken policy decisions to continue the work it had initiated 10 years ago: "Whether it is defence, space, external and home affairs, education, Digital India and making India a manufacturing hub, spending ₹11 lakh crore annually on building infrastructure, *mahila-yuva-garib-kisan* (welfare of women, youth, poor and farmers), we are continuing with and taking forward the work that was started in 2014. Even our foreign policy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

- **In the first step**, simultaneous elections will be held to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- **In the second step**, elections to municipalities and the panchayats will be synchronised with elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies
- This will be done in such a way that local body elections are held within 100 days of the elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.
- This will require ratification by not less than one-half of the states.
- **Achieving synchronization for first step**
 - To achieve synchronisation at the first step, the government should take a one-time step where they pick a specific date after a Lok Sabha election.
 - After this date, the terms of all state assemblies that have elections will end along with Parliament's term.
 - To effect these changes, the panel has recommended amendments to **Article 83** (duration of Houses of Parliament) and **Article 172** (duration of State legislatures) of the Constitution.
 - For this, no ratification by the states will be required for the constitutional amendment.
- **Insertion of Article 324A**
 - The committee recommended an **Article 324A**, which states that Parliament may make a law to ensure that elections to municipalities and panchayats be held together with General Elections
 - This is to enable municipal and panchayat elections to be held simultaneously with the others.
- **Single electoral roll and election ID**
 - To make single electoral roll and electoral photo identity cards for use in elections to all the three tiers of government, the Constitution should be amended.
 - For this, the committee recommended that Article 325 of the Constitution be amended.
 - Then only, Election Commission of India can prepare a single electoral roll and election ID in consultation with the State Election Commissions.
 - These amendments will require ratification by not less than one-half of the states.
- **In case of hung house**
 - In the event of a hung House, a no-confidence motion, or any such event, fresh elections should be held to constitute the new Lok Sabha or state Assembly for the unexpired term of the House.
- **Meeting logistics requirement**
 - The committee suggests that the Election Commission of India should plan ahead with State Election Commissions for things like manpower, polling staff, security forces, and voting machines to ensure fair elections across all levels of government at the same time.
- **Rejected the Germany model of bringing no-confidence motion against a government**
 - The committee rejected the concept of constructive vote of no-confidence, which is the model in Germany.
 - In this model, to bring a no-confidence motion against a government, a positive vote of confidence in an alternate leader or government is required.
 - The committee said that the prevailing Parliamentary practice in this regard is appropriate and does not require any change.
 - Making a motion of no confidence by the Members of the Parliament is not only their right, but also their responsibility.
 - The Committee would not like to dilute this feature of the Indian Parliamentary system.

6. Vande Bharat Express Trains GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated six new Vande Bharat Express trains, marking another milestone in India's expanding rail network. The six new routes inaugurated include services between **Tatanagar-Patna**, **Brahmapur-Tatanagar**, **Rourkela-Howrah**, **Deoghar-Varanasi**, **Bhagalpur-Howrah**, and **Gaya-Howrah**.
- **More on News:**
 - Vande Bharat is India's first indigenously designed and manufactured **semi-high-speed train**.
 - These semi-high-speed trains has transformed rail travel in India. Originally launched as **Train 18** in 2019, these trains have become a game-changer for Indian Railways, connecting major cities in half the time.
 - According to the Indian Railways, these trains have already completed approximately 36,000 trips and carried over 3.17 crore passengers.
 - The fleet travelled a distance equivalent to 7 rounds of the Earth in the fiscal year 2023-24.
 - The extensive network of these trains covers more than 280 districts across 24 states and Union Territories, highlighting their widespread reach and efficiency.
 - The newest iteration, **Vande Bharat 2.0**, boasts several technological upgrades, including:
 - faster acceleration
 - indigenous 'Kavach' safety system
 - WiFi
 - anti-virus system
 - These features make it a state-of-the-art option for travelers, ensuring both speed and safety.



Six Vande Bharat trains flagged off, rly projects worth ₹660 cr launched

DHEERAJ MISHRA
JAMSHEDPUR, SEPTEMBER 15

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Sunday flagged off six Vande Bharat trains and laid foundation stones for railway projects worth ₹660 crore in Jharkhand, where Assembly elections are expected later this year.

Addressing the flagging-off event at Tatanagar railway station via video conferencing from Ranchi, the Prime Minister said the trains will not only improve connectivity but boost cultural activities and tourism in the region.

All the six premium trains will either have the destination station in Jharkhand or pass through the state, improving rail connectivity with neighbouring Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal and UP.

The new Vande Bharat trains will run on the Tatanagar-Patna; Bhagalpur-Dumka-Howrah; Brahmapur-Tatanagar; Gaya-Howrah; Deoghar-Varanasi; and Rourkela-Howrah routes.

Recalling the time when modern development was limited to only a few states and states such as Jharkhand were left behind, the Prime Minister said the mantra of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' has transformed the thinking and priorities of the nation. "Nation's priorities are its poor, tribals, dalits, deprived, women, youth and farmers," he said.

The Prime Minister said that today every city and every state wants a Vande Bharat train to boost connectivity. He underscored that the expansion of rail connectivity in eastern India will strengthen the economy of the region and benefit businesses, professionals and students.

Speaking about the boost in cultural activities as a result of the six new Vande Bharat trains, Modi said that a large number of pilgrims who visit Kashi, from India as well as abroad, would now get a chance to visit Baba Baidyanath in Deoghar with the introduction of Varanasi-Deoghar Vande Bharat. He said that it would boost tourism in the region and create new job opportunities for the youth.

"Modern railway infrastructure is imperative to fast paced development," he said.

Modi was scheduled to arrive at Tatanagar station to flag off the trains but his helicopter could not take off from Ranchi airport due to poor visibility and rainfall. However, later he addressed a public meeting in Jamshedpur.

The Prime Minister also laid foundation stones for Madhupur bypass line in Deoghar district and a railway coach depot in Hazaribag district of Jharkhand. After completion, the Madhupur bypass line is expected to help in reducing travel time between Giridih and Jasidih.