

The Kesavananda Bharati judgment held that Parliament cannot use its constituent power to alter the basic structure or the essential features of the Constitution. The Parliament, as senior advocate Nani Palkhivala said cannot cease to be a creature of the Constitution and become its master. The 25th Constitutional Amendment introduced Article 31C into the Constitution to implement the Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 39 (b) and (c). The Amendment mandated that any law enacted with this objective cannot be "deemed" void on the ground that it was inconsistent with fundamental rights. The latter half of Article 31C added that such a law would be outside judicial review.

In short, the Amendment gave Directive Principles primacy over fundamental rights and judicial review of the apex court. The 13-judge Bench invalidated the part of Article 31C which took away the power of judicial review of the court. The basic structure or framework of the Constitution is its living spirit, holding up the body of its text. It is the "soul" of the Constitution, inextricably linked to the values enshrined in the Preamble, without which the document and the ideas that make it sacred would collapse.

Russia and Estonia on Monday were expelling the ambassadors from each other's countries in a tit-for-tat move, saying that their diplomatic missions will be headed by charges d'affaires. The Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Estonian Ambassador Margus Laidre and ordered him to leave the country by February 7.

The fifth Scorpene class conventional submarine was commissioned into the Indian Navy as INS Vagir in the presence of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R. Hari Kumar, at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on Monday. The sixth and the last of the French origin Scorpene class submarines, Vagsheer, being built in India under technology transfer is currently undergoing sea trials and will be delivered to the Navy in 2024, the original manufacturer Naval Group said. With this, the Navy now has 16 conventional and one nuclear submarine in service.

In an important step that will enhance the endurance of the Scorpene class conventional submarines of the Indian Navy, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Naval Group have reached an agreement to fit the indigenous fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system on INS Kulvari soon. The AIP has been developed by the DRDO's Naval Materials Research Laboratory and the land-based prototype has been tested.

Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Monday announced that six time World champion and Olympic medallist boxer M.C. Mary Kom will head a government-appointed five member Oversight Committee to investigate the charges levelled by some prominent wrestlers against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Olympic medallist wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, well known shuttler

SWITZERLAND BECAME FIRST WTO MEMBER TO FORMALLY ACCEPT NEW AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

1. Agreement sets new binding, multilateral rules to curb harmful subsidies, which are a key factor in the widespread depletion of world's fish stocks. More than a third of world stocks are fished at biologically unsustainable levels. It is the first WTO agreement to focus on environment and only second agreement reached at WTO since its inception. It was adopted at WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference held in Geneva (June 2022). Acceptances from two-thirds of WTO members are needed for Agreement to come into effect.
2. **Key features of the agreement**-Prohibits subsidies to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and bans subsidies for fishing overfished stocks and for fishing on unregulated high seas. Recognizes needs of developing and least-developed countries (LDCs) and establishes a Fund to provide technical assistance and capacity building to help them implement the Agreement.
3. **Recently**, European Union pledged €1 million for this fund. No prohibition on a WTO Member regarding subsidy to its vessel or operator if it is not carrying out IUU. No prohibition on subsidies that are implemented to rebuild stock to a biologically sustainable level.
4. **India's stand**-WTO Members who have provided huge subsidies in the past, and engaged in large-scale industrial fishing should take more obligations to prohibit subsidies based on 'polluter pay principle' and 'common but differentiated responsibilities'.

ECONOMY AT RISK FROM MOVE TO CLEAN ENERGY

1. A recent study has highlighted that India's financial sector is highly exposed to risks of economy transitioning from being largely dependent on fossil fuel to clean energy as: 60% of lending to mining sector was for oil and gas extraction. 20% of manufacturing sector debt is for petroleum refining and related industries.
2. High-carbon industries like power generation, chemicals, etc, have less financial capacity to respond to shocks and stresses due to transition. In the recent years, India has shown its commitment to environmental stewardship, climate action and focus on renewables by focusing on clean energy.
3. Clean energy is broadly defined as energy derived from renewable, zero-emissions sources, as well as energy saved through energy efficiency measures. Need is felt because of reasons like inexhaustible resources, energy security by reducing import dependency, reduced carbon emissions to meet global commitments, cleaner environment etc.
4. **Steps taken by India**-PM announced net-zero commitment by 2070. Policies like Green hydrogen policy, Offshore wind policy etc. Schemes such as PM-KUSUM, FAME INDIA etc. Union Budget 2022-23 provides roadmap for clean energy and climate mitigation.

SEBI LAUNCHES INFORMATION DATABASE ON MUNICIPAL BONDS

1. Database contains a wide range of information in form of statistics and regulations, circulars etc. issued by Sebi and information to be obtained by an Issuer to tap Municipal Bond Market. A municipal bond is a debt instrument issued by municipal corporations. Bengaluru floated municipal bonds for first time in India in 1997.
2. **Need for Municipal Bonds**-Better urban infrastructure require greater flow of financial resources to Local governments. Reduce dependence of municipal corporations on central or state government. Will enable adoption of innovative and appropriate technologies for waste treatment, tackling of air and water pollution etc.
3. **Constraints Faced**-Lack of a secondary market constraints attracting a more extensive investor base. Conditions imposed such as prescribed limits and maximum loan repayment period. Poor accounting standards and low institutional capabilities. RBI in a recent report suggested several measures for resource mobilisation through municipal bonds such as: Sound and efficient regulation, greater transparency, and better governance. Listing municipal bonds in stock exchanges for developing a secondary market.
4. **General obligation bonds**: for enhancing civic amenities such as water, sanitation, garbage disposal, etc.

'INFLATION TARGETING' NEITHER NECESSARY, NOR SUFFICIENT FOR PRICE CONTROL: IMF PAPER

1. Paper suggested that for some countries targeting leads to improved outcomes. However, for most countries there is limited impact of such framework. Inflation targeting is a technique to bring inflation to a targeted level within a specific time horizon. It controls inflation level by increasing or decreasing interest rate prevailing in economy.

Trupti Murgunde, former Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) CEO Commander Rajesh Rajagopalan and former Executive Director (Team) of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Radhica Sreeman are the other committee members.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday named the 21 largest unnamed islands in the Andaman & Nicobar archipelago after 21 Param Vir Chakra awardees. Mr. Modi participated in the ceremony through videoconferencing and unveiled a model of the national memorial dedicated to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose that is to be built on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep.

The Assam Cabinet has decided to book men who marry minor girls under stringent laws prescribing imprisonment from two years to life, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday. Citing the National Family Health Survey 5 report, he said an average of 31.8% of girls in Assam get married at the "prohibited age" and 11.7% of them become mothers before adulthood compared with the national average of 23.3% and 6.8%, respectively. The legal age for marriage is 18 years for women and 21 for men.

₹ 96,292 crore, the amount of investment in Indian capital markets through participatory notes (P-notes) at the end of December 2022. P-notes are issued by registered FPIs to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market indirectly.

\$ 1.2 billion, the amount Pakistan spent on the import of transportation items, including luxury cars, high-end electric vehicles, and their parts, during the last six months amid sinking reserves and a fear of default, according to a media report. The country is in the middle of a financial crunch with foreign exchange reserves depleting to as low as \$4 billion.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Monday that Japan faces the severest security environment since the end of the Second World War and pledged to push a military build-up under a newly adopted security strategy, and tackle rapidly declining births so the country can sustain national strength. Mr. Kishida's government in December adopted key security and defence reforms, including a counterstrike capability that breaks from the country's exclusively self-defence-only post-war principle. Japan says the current deployment of missile interceptors is insufficient to defend it from rapid weapons advancement in China and North Korea.

Increasing rate is believed to bring down inflation by curtailing economic activity. Decreasing rate increases inflation level by increasing economic activity.

2. Importance of Inflation Targeting More transparent, accountable, and coherent policymaking. Price stability allows investors to confidently invest for productive activities. Price stability maintains purchasing power of consumers. In 2016, Parliament amended RBI Act, 1934 to change monetary policy, and introduce an inflation targeting framework.
3. As per the new framework, central government, in consultation with RBI sets: An inflation target. An upper and lower tolerance level for retail inflation. Target has been set at 4%, with an upper tolerance limit of 6% and a lower tolerance limit of 2%. Target and bands are revised every five years. In March 2021, the existing targets were carried forward.

AHOM BURIAL MOUNDS "MAIDAM" IN ASSAM TO VIE FOR UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE (WHS) TAG

1. **Presently, there are 40 UNESCO WHS in India:** 32 cultural (none in the northeast), 7 natural, and 1 mixed type. Maidams are the burial mounds of Ahom kings, queens, and nobles. Though Maidams are found in all districts of Upper Assam, Charaideo, first capital of Ahoms was necropolis of almost all Ahom Royals.
2. **Maidam consists of three major features:** A vault or chamber (to keep mortal remains). A hemispherical earthen mound covering the chamber with a brick structure (Chow-chali) for annual offering over it. An octagonal boundary wall having an arched gateway on its west.
3. Their sizes vary from a modest mound to a hillock, depending upon the power, status and resources of the person buried. Special officer, known as Changrung Phukan, were appointed for construction of all the civil works including royal Maidam. Ahom kings used to be buried along with their treasures and articles of their day-to-day use.
4. **About Ahom Kingdom-**Traditionally and culturally Ahoms are members of Great Tai (Tai-Yai) group of people. They entered upper Assam region of Brahmaputra Valley through Patkai hills under leadership of Chaulung Sinkapha, first king of the Ahom dynasty. He established capital at Charaideo. Lachit Borphukan was one of the greatest war generals who fought against Mughals.

ChatGPT POPULARITY RAISES CYBERSECURITY CONCERNS

1. ChatGPT (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) is an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot launched in November 2022 by OpenAI, which can comprehend and generate natural language or human text. It can respond to user queries with summarized information in short and simple sentences.
2. OpenAI is a leading research laboratory based in San Francisco (USA). GPT is a kind of computer language model that relies on deep learning techniques to produce human-like text based on inputs. It is trained on large amounts of text data and uses an algorithm known as Transformer to learn how to generate text that is like human conversation. Applications include creating chatbots for customer service, generating responses to questions in online forums, creating personalised content for social media posts etc.
3. **Concerns related to ChatGPT-**Potential automation and scaling of ChatGPT may industrialise creation and personalisation of malicious web pages, highly targeted phishing campaigns, and social engineering reliant scams. It will allow people with less or no skills in coding to launch cyberattacks. It would be difficult to distinguish between A.I generated content and one's original work.



"You are always under an obligation.
If you're breathing, you owe to the planet."

DR. KHAN
(KSG)