

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

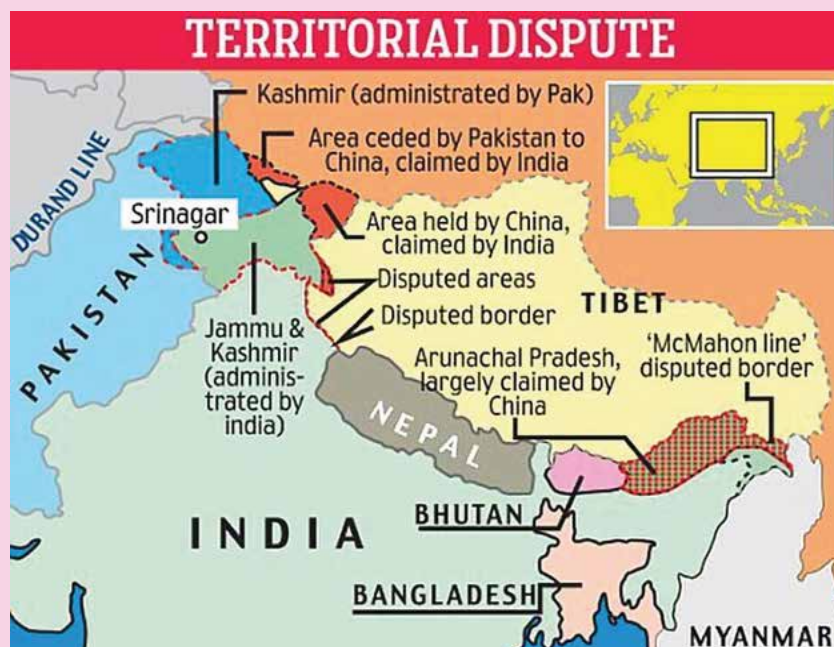
SPORTS MINISTER WILL SKIP ASIAD INAUGURAL AS CHINA BARS ENTRY OF ARUNACHAL PLAYERS

BACKGROUND:

The Arunachal Pradesh issue is a long-standing territorial dispute between India and China. The dispute centers around the sovereignty and ownership of this region.

Key points about the Arunachal Pradesh issue:

- China claims that the region historically belonged to Tibet and has referred to Arunachal Pradesh as "South Tibet."



- McMahon Line: The border between India and Tibet was delineated by the McMahon Line. The McMahon Line was drawn as part of the Shimla Accord in 1914, which was signed between British India, Tibet, and China. However, China later rejected the agreement, leading to the dispute.
- Continuing Tensions: Since the 1962 war, tensions have

persisted in the region. Both India and China have maintained military forces along the disputed border, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Incidents of border incursions and standoffs between the two countries have occurred sporadically.

- Unlike some other border disputes, there is no mutually recognized border in the Arunachal Pradesh region. Both countries have their own perceptions of where the border should be, and these perceptions do not align.

Asian Games denial of Arunachal Sports person

- Three Indian wushu players from Arunachal Pradesh, Nyeman Wangsu, Onilu Tega, and Mepung Lamgu, were denied entry into China despite having valid e-accreditations from the organizers of the Asian Games.
- The Indian government expressed surprise and disappointment over China's treatment of these sportspersons who held valid accreditation for the games.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) decided to cancel the ministerial visit and lodge protests with Beijing after learning that the players were prevented from boarding their flight from Delhi late on Thursday night.
- The airline involved, Cathay Pacific, eventually allowed two of the Arunachal residents to board their flight to Hong Kong, but they were then prevented from continuing on to Hangzhou.
- The Indian government has accused China of discriminating against the Indian sportspersons from Arunachal Pradesh in a targeted and premeditated manner. They firmly rejected the differential treatment of Indian citizens based on their domicile or ethnicity.
- This incident highlights the ongoing tensions and sensitivities between India and China, as well as the impact of such disputes on international sporting events.



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

SUPREME COURT REJECTS PLEA FOR EVM AUDIT

CONTEXT: Supreme Court rejects petition for independent audit of EVM source code, citing system integrity.

BACKGROUND: The Supreme Court rejected a writ petition seeking an independent audit of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) source code. The petitioner argued that auditing the source code, which serves as the core of EVMs, would enhance confidence in the election process. However, the court declined to entertain the request.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Advocate Sunil Ahya called for an independent audit of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) source code using the IEEE 1028 standard, citing concerns about the integrity of the democratic process and national security.
- The Supreme Court noted that the Election Commission of India (EC) holds constitutional responsibility for elections and found no evidence of breach, declining to intervene in a matter it considered a "policy issue."
- The court emphasized that decisions about EVM



source code auditing and public disclosure are sensitive, given their impact on the election process under the EC's supervision.

IEEE 1028-2008

- Review Process:** IEEE 1028-2008 defines a systematic process for reviewing and auditing software documents, code, and designs, promoting quality assurance.
- Roles and Responsibilities:** It outlines the roles and responsibilities of reviewers, authors, and managers, ensuring accountability and clarity in the review process.
- Entry and Exit Criteria:** The standard establishes clear entry and exit criteria, helping teams decide when a review is ready to begin and when it can be concluded.
- Review Types:** IEEE 1028-2008 defines different review types, including informal reviews, formal inspections, and walkthroughs, providing flexibility for various project needs.
- Documentation:** It emphasizes the importance of documenting review findings and resolutions, facilitating traceability and continuous improvement in software development processes.

INTERNAL SECURITY

CIVILIANS USING TRUCKS RESEMBLING OURS IN MANIPUR, SAYS ASSAM RIFLES

CONTEXT: The Assam Rifles has written to the Manipur Police alerting that "a few Meitei miscreants" may use refurbished civilian trucks which resemble vehicles used by the paramilitary force, for "anti-national activities" to tarnish the reputation of the security force.



The Assam Rifles cautioned of Meitei miscreants acquiring many used TATA 407 (mini-trucks) from civil market and converting them to resemble the vehicles being used by the Assam Rifles by painting and putting the AR insignia with the help of VBIGs [Valley-based Insurgent Groups]. More than 4,000 weapons have been looted from police armouries since May 3 when ethnic violence erupted in Manipur.

TIMELINE:

- July 10:** Assam Rifles registered a criminal case against COCOMI, an influential Meitei civil society organisation, after the outfit gave a call to people "not to surrender weapons."
- August 7:** The BJP State leadership submitted a memorandum to PM Modi demanding the withdrawal of the Assam Rifles from the buffer areas alleging bias towards Kuki-Zo people.
- September 10:** Manipur Police repeatedly flagging misuse of camouflage and police uniforms with several instances of men carrying automatic weapons were found firing at the Central security forces deployed in the buffer zones, preceded by blockade and protest by women-led groups.
- September 16:** Widespread protests erupted in the Meitei-dominated valley districts demanding release of five persons arrested with sophisticated weapons in camouflage uniform. The valley districts have witnessed complete shutdown and agitation in support of the five men who have been referred to as "village defence volunteers" by the civil society groups.

HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

PANEL CALLS FOR REVISING RULES OF CONSTRUCTION AROUND PROTECTED ASI MONUMENTS

CONTEXT: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport Tourism and Culture has asked the government to revise the rules to make them realistic.

The parliamentary panel has observed that the provision of 100-metre prohibited area and 300-metre regulated area around all monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has pitted the local community against these heritage structures in many places as they find it difficult to carry out necessary repair work of their residential spaces.

The prohibited and restricted area provision was introduced in 2010 through an amendment to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958. It prohibits and regulates all activities like mining and construction around 100 metres and 300 metres. The Central government has already said that it was in the process of amending the Act.

It has also recommended rationalizing the application of such rules based on the historical significance of the monuments.

It also recommended that the list of all 3,691 ASI-protected monuments be rationalised and categorised based on their national significance, unique architectural value and specific heritage content.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UKRAINE HITS RUSSIA'S BLACK SEA FLEET BASE IN CRIMEA

CONTEXT: Ukraine conducted a missile attack on Russia's Black Sea Fleet headquarters located in Sevastopol, Crimea. The attack left the main building smoldering.



Crimea, which was annexed by Russia from Ukraine in 2014, has been the target of various attacks since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine approximately 19 months ago.

Previous Attacks:

Previous attacks on Crimea resulted in civilian deaths, but this is one of the first reported attacks specifically on the Black Sea Fleet headquarters. In July 2022, six people were reported wounded in an attack on the same location, but it was unclear if they were civilians or military personnel.

While Ukrainian officials have claimed responsibility for recent attacks on Crimea, they did not immediately confirm or deny their involvement in this specific missile attack.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

QUAD MINISTERS HOLD TALKS ON RULES-BASED ORDER, UN REFORM

CONTEXT: Foreign Ministers of the Quad (India, Australia, Japan, and the U.S.) met along the fringes of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The QUAD reaffirmed the group's commitment to a "free and open" Indo-Pacific region, where disputes are settled in accordance with international law. The Quad also committed itself to the principles of the UN charter and reform of the institution. A new initiative to help countries respond to terror attacks was also discussed.

Outcomes of the QUAD Talks

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his counterparts discussed the outcome of the Quad Counterterrorism Working Group's Consequence Management Exercise, which studied how the Quad could help regional countries that had experienced terror attacks.

The Ministers stressed their commitment to countering terrorism, including terror financing and cross-border movement of terrorists and curbing the use of emerging technologies for terror purposes.

On Ukraine, the Quad expressed "deep concern", calling for a "just" and "lasting" peace in Ukraine, without naming Russia as the aggressor.

The Quad also backed the UN's efforts to restart the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), a deal that secures the export of grain from Ukraine and Russia. The agreement had expired in July with countries calling for its resumption, including at the G-20 in New Delhi.

The joint statement also calls for "comprehensive" UN reform, including expanding permanent and non-permanent representation on the UN Security Council.

On North Korea, the statement condemned Pyongyang's "destabilising" missile launches and pursuit of nuclear weapons.

On Myanmar, the Quad supported a transition to an "inclusive federal democracy" and the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus (an April 2021 agreement between the Myanmar junta and the ASEAN group of countries).

The group reiterated its commitment to practical initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Quad Infrastructure Fellowship Programme, a pandemic preparedness exercise, and the development of a "trusted and secure" telecommunications network.



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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

'OIL PRICE A CONCERN BUT NO ALARM YET'

CONTEXT: The recent run-up in global crude oil prices is a concern for the Indian economy but doesn't yet warrant alarm, and prices of some food items that had spurred inflation above 7 % in July are "on the retreat" while those of others like tur dal will ease once imports hit the market.

Oil watch

Finance Ministry admits the 'steadily climbing' global crude oil prices pose a risk to the economic outlook

- Terms a likely stock market dip 'in the wake of an overdue global stock market correction' an 'ever-present' risk
- Economic outlook on track for a 'baseline estimate' of 6.5% real GDP growth this fiscal
- Ministry says it sees incipient signs of a new private sector formation cycle



Short-Term Energy Outlook monthly crude oil spot prices (Jan 2019-Dec 2024)
dollars per barrel



Apart from "steadily climbing" oil prices, the Union Ministry of Finance identified the monsoon deficit as another risk to the economic outlook, and termed a likely stock market dip "in the wake of an overdue global stock market correction" as an "ever-present" risk.

The Union Ministry of Finance in its economic review for August forecasted on track for a "baseline estimate" of 6.5 % real GDP growth this year. The Union Ministry of Finance cited high frequency indicators such as record e-way bills and electronic toll collections as signs of healthy economic activity. It pointed to a 4.2 % uptick in capital goods imports in the first quarter to suggest higher public capital spending had begun to crowd in private investment. Private sector is in good health as data on advance tax payments... confirm," the ministry noted, asserting that businesses were 'investing'.

The U.S. 10-year bond yield has crossed 4.3 %, and the S&P 500 index is not too far from its all-time high. The risks of a stock market correction and geopolitical developments could potentially hurt investment sentiment in the second half.

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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

JP MORGAN'S DECISION TO LOWER GOVT.'S BORROWING COST, FREE UP LIQUIDITY: CEA

CONTEXT: Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran noted that JP Morgan's move to include Indian government bonds in its global emerging market bond indices could potentially lower the country's sovereign borrowing costs, help finance the current account deficit and free up liquidity for domestic financiers to deploy in more productive assets.

In a September 21 note, JP Morgan conveyed India's inclusion into its emerging market bond indices from June 28, 2024, starting with a 1 % exposure to 23 "index eligible" bonds with a "combined notional value of \$ 330 billion".

'INDIA G-SECS TO ATTRACT \$30 BN ON ENTRY INTO JPM'S INDICES'

The bonds' inclusion staggered over 10 months till March 2025 with the Indian securities expected to reach their maximum weight of 10 %.

The inclusion of Indian government bonds in JP Morgan's bond indices could draw foreign fund inflows in the range of \$30-\$40 billion over the next 18 months. The inclusion could prompt passive inflows of about \$30 billion and at least another \$10 billion from other funds.

- Foreign ownership in the Indian government bonds market, reckoned to be the third-largest among emerging markets at \$1.2 trillion, is less than 2 %, one of the lowest among its peers.
- Higher foreign ownership would "relieve" the Indian financial system from having to be these bonds' biggest buyers and thus be in a position to lend that money for more productive purposes.
- Trigger some appreciation of the rupee, which could prove a challenge as keeping it competitive is also important, and expose bond and currency markets to external turbulence, but on balance, the benefits outweigh such concerns.

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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

'DATA SHOW TEXTILE EXPORTS LIKELY REVIVING'

CONTEXT: Textile and apparel exports turned positive last month after more than six months of contraction, as per data shared by the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI).

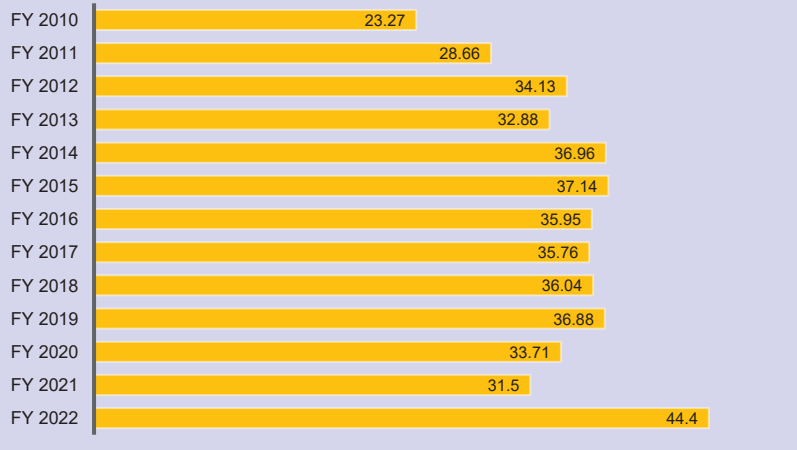


FIGURE: Bar chart representation of the annual value of textile exports from India.

With exports worth \$2,951.9 million in August 2023, the year-on-year (y-o-y) growth was 4.33 %. Textile exports increased 14 %, apparel exports declined 8.15 %. Cumulative exports of textiles and apparel for April-August, however, were 10.5% lower y-o-y.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIA AND THE GREAT POWER CONTEST IN WEST ASIA

The article discusses the evolving dynamics in West Asia and the role of India, the United States, and China in the region. Here are the key points:

Biden's West Asia Strategy: The Biden administration has a two-part strategy for West Asia.

1. First, it aims to bring its allies in the region, including Gulf Arab states and Israel, closer together to address common geopolitical challenges, particularly Iran's influence. The Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and some Arab nations, set the stage for this strategy. A key objective is to facilitate a deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which would further strengthen this alignment.
2. The second part of Biden's approach is to reassure its friends and allies that the U.S. remains committed to the region. This includes initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor, which seeks to enhance economic integration between India and West Asia. The U.S. hopes that such projects will help maintain its influence in the region, secure major shipping lanes, and demonstrate its staying capacity.

China's Growing Presence: China is increasingly focusing on West Asia due to its significant dependence on the region for oil imports. It has become a major trading partner of Gulf Arab states and has invested heavily in the region. Additionally, China has shown willingness to play a peacemaking role, as seen in its efforts to facilitate the Iran-Saudi reconciliation agreement.

U.S. Dilemma: The U.S. is deprioritizing the region in terms of its security commitments as it faces greater challenges in Eastern Europe and East Asia. However, it cannot completely exit West Asia because China is seeking to fill the vacuum. The U.S. aims to strengthen its security architecture in the region and involve India as a partner to counterbalance China's influence.

Iran Factor: The rivalry between Iran and Israel remains a central geopolitical contradiction in West Asia. While Gulf Arabs have pursued détente with Iran to avoid being caught in this rivalry, tensions persist. Any escalation in the Iran-Israel conflict could destabilize the region and disrupt U.S. plans.

Opportunities for India: The U.S.-China competition in West Asia provides new avenues for India's engagement in the region. India, with its size, economy, and historical connections, is seen as an important partner by the U.S.

India should consider multiple avenues for engagement, such as the International North-South Transport Corridor and the 'Middle East Corridor,' without aligning too closely with any great power.

In summary, the article highlights the changing dynamics in West Asia, where the U.S. is adjusting its strategy to counter China's growing influence, and India has opportunities to play a significant geopolitical role in the region. It emphasizes the importance of India's balanced and multi-engagement approach.

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—Benjamin Franklin



"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." — Dr. Seuss

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

A CLEAR MESSAGE TO INDUSTRY ON DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Both Houses of the Parliament of India passed The Mediation Bill, 2023 in its recent monsoon session of Parliament and referred to as the Mediation Act, 2023.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) refers to a bouquet of mechanisms that enables disputing parties to resolve their differences amicably, without the intervention of courts. The Indian legal framework already encourages courts to refer the disputing parties to ADR procedures, including mediation, if there were elements of settlement which the parties may accept. The Act will take this encouragement a step forward. Irrespective of a prior mediation agreement, it will obligate each party to take steps to settle their dispute through pre-litigation mediation before approaching an Indian court. To facilitate this process, the Act will also require courts and relevant institutions to maintain a panel of mediators.

Mediation Bill, 2023**Key Features**

- **Pre-litigation Mediation:** Parties must attempt to settle civil or commercial disputes by mediation before approaching any court or tribunal. The litigation proceedings in the court or tribunal can be suspended at any stage referring the parties to mediation on request for the same.
- **Disputes not fit for Mediation:** List disputes, that can be amended by the Centre, that are not fit for mediation.
 - Claims against minors or persons of unsound mind
 - Criminal prosecution
 - Affecting the rights of third parties
- **Applicability:** The Bill will apply to mediations conducted in India on:
 - Civil disputes involving only domestic parties,
 - Commercial disputes involving at least one foreign party
 - Existence of a Mediation Agreement, stating mediation as per the Bill.
 - Disputant is Central or State Government involving Commercial disputes and Other notified disputes.
- **Mediation Process:** Proceedings must be completed within 180 days, that can be extended by 180 days by the parties. A party may withdraw from mediation after two sessions. Court annexed mediation must be conducted as per the rules framed by the Supreme Court or High Courts.
- **Mediators:** Mediators may be appointed by:
 - Parties by agreement
 - Mediation service provider*, an institution administering mediation.
- **Mediation Council of India:** The central government will establish the Mediation Council of India.
- **Functions**
 - Registration of mediators
 - Recognising Mediation Service Providers (MSPs)
 - Recognising Mediation Institutes - train, educate, and certify mediators.
- **Mediated Settlement Agreement:** Agreements resulting from mediation (other than community mediation) will be final, binding, and enforceable in the same manner as court judgments.
- **Grounds for challenging the Agreement:**
 - Fraud
 - Corruption
 - Impersonation
 - Disputes not fit for mediation.
- **Community Mediation:** A panel of THREE mediators (may include persons of standing in the community, and representatives of resident welfare associations) can attempt to resolve disputes likely to affect the peace and harmony amongst residents of a locality.

Analysis:

- Reduce the filing of frivolous claims before Indian courts with a time bound mediation process.
- Confidentiality of a mediation mitigate the risk of deterioration of the parties' relationship due to a publicly fought dispute.
- Require the mediation to ordinarily be conducted by an empanelled mediator, who must always be neutral and have uncompromising expertise.
- Envisages "mediation service providers - Arbitration Institutions" to provide not only the services of a mediator but also all the facilities, secretarial assistance, and infrastructure for the efficient conduct of mediation.

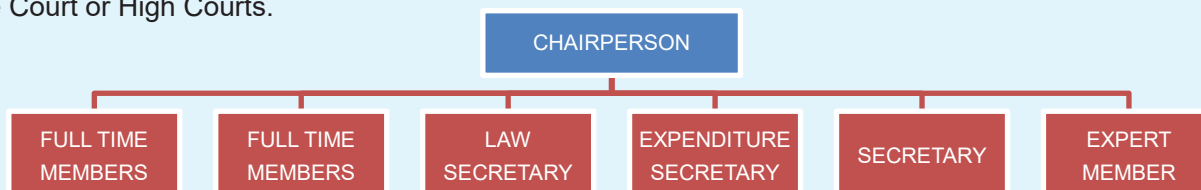


FIGURE: The Council will consist of a CHAIRPERSON, 2 Full-Time Members (with experience in mediation or ADR), 3 ex-officio members (including the Law Secretary, and the Expenditure Secretary), and a part-time member from an industry body.



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

PEOPLE COUNT

The article discusses the importance of conducting the Census in India without unnecessary delays for political reasons. Here are the key points from the article:

Planning and Development: The Census in India is a vital exercise that collects population data essential for planning and development. It provides valuable demographic information that helps in policy formulation and resource allocation.

India has conducted the Census every ten years since 1881, and it is considered a fundamental part of the country's governance and administration.

COVID-19 Delay: The decennial Census for 2021 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the easing of pandemic-related restrictions and the readiness of the state machinery, the government has not provided political clearance to commence the Census.

The government's reluctance to specify a date or year for the

Census has led to speculation about its intent. One possible reason for the delay until 2024 is the avoidance of including a question about caste, which has political implications.

Census and Delimitation: The next Census will serve as the basis for the next delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, which involves redistributing representation among states. This could be a factor in the government's decision to delay the Census.

Data Integration: Recent legislative changes, such as the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023, will enable centralized data integration from various databases, including Aadhaar, ration cards, passports, and driving licenses. This will streamline population data management.

The article emphasizes the importance of transparency and cooperation with states and political parties in conducting the Census. It suggests that the government should engage in open dialogue to address any concerns or issues related to the Census.





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