freedom UPSC
TOGETHER WE SCALE HEIGHTS

Daily Current Affairs
🎯 To The Point
by Dhananjay Gautam

Table Of Content   28 Nov 2024

Subscribe to our
YouTube **Freedom UPSC with Dhananjay Gautam**

1 ISRO gets government approval for Venus mission "Shukrayaan"

Context: The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has received government approval for its ambitious **Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)**, also known as **Mission Shukrayaan**. Scheduled for launch in **2028**, this mission aims to explore Venus's atmosphere, surface, and its interactions with the Sun.

About Mission Shukrayaan:

Launch Timeline:

The mission is set to lift off in **2028** under the auspices of the **Department of Space**.

Mission Objectives

The mission's goals include:

- **Exploring the Venusian Atmosphere**: Investigating **dust particles**, **airglow phenomena**, and atmospheric interactions.
- **Mapping Surface Topography**: Studying Venus's **surface features** and **solar X-ray spectrum**.
- **Testing Advanced Technology**: Demonstrating **aerobraking** and **thermal management techniques** in Venus's harsh environment.
  - **Aerobraking** uses a planet's atmosphere to reduce the spacecraft's speed and adjust its orbit efficiently.

Mission Payloads:

- **16 Indian Payloads**: Designed to perform diverse scientific tasks.
- **Collaborative Payloads**:
  - **VISWAS and RAVI** (Indian and international collaboration).
  - **VIRAL** (an international payload).

Significance of Mission Shukrayaan:

Scientific Advancements

- Enhancing understanding of **planetary evolution** and the **solar system's dynamics**.
- Gaining deeper insights into Venus's **atmospheric composition** and its interaction with solar radiation.

Climate Change Insights:

Venus's atmosphere, composed primarily of **carbon dioxide**, can provide critical insights into the **greenhouse effect**, helping us better understand climate change on Earth.

Broader Impacts:

- Investigating the **evolution of Earth** and its atmosphere.
- Contributing to comparative planetary studies.

Challenges of the Mission:

1. Extreme Environmental Conditions: **High Temperatures and Pressures**: Venus's surface temperature can exceed **470°C**, posing risks to spacecraft systems.

2. Corrosive Atmosphere: Presence of **sulfuric acid clouds**, which can corrode components made of materials like **steel** and **titanium**.

3. Other Technological Hurdles

- Navigating **harsh terrain**.
- Limited **sunlight** availability for powering **solar panels**.
- Developing systems to withstand Venus's **hostile environment**.

Why Mission Shukrayaan Matters:

Shukrayaan is a significant leap in **India's space exploration** journey, demonstrating technological prowess and fostering international collaborations. By unlocking the secrets of **Earth's twin planet**, this mission promises to deepen our understanding of planetary science and inspire future space endeavors.

NEWS
To the Point
Daily Current Affairs
28 **Nov** 2024
Freedom UPSC
TOGETHER WE SCALE HEIGHTS

2 **India-Mediterranean Relations: Strengthening Historical and Strategic Ties**

Context: At the **10th MED Mediterranean Dialogue** in Rome, India's **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** highlighted the growing importance of fostering deeper ties between **India** and the **Mediterranean region**, focusing on mutual benefits across multiple domains.

About the Mediterranean Region

The **Mediterranean region** encompasses:
- **Southern Europe**: Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Malta, and Cyprus.
- **North Africa**: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.
- **West Asia**: Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine.

A historical hub for **global trade, culture, and geopolitics**, this region holds immense potential for deepening interactions with India.

India-Mediterranean Relations:

1. Historical Ties and Cultural Exchange:
- Ancient trade relations flourished with the **Roman Empire** and **Greeks**.
- The **port city of Muziris** on India's Malabar Coast was a key trading hub for **spices, gold**, and **exotic goods**.
- These connections laid a strong foundation for rich **cultural exchanges**, which continue to shape contemporary relations.

2. Strategic and Geopolitical Importance:
- The Mediterranean's **strategic location** links **Asia, Africa, and Europe**, aligning with India's vision for a **free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific**.
- It plays a pivotal role in India's **connectivity and geopolitical outreach**, fostering better ties across continents.

3. Political and Defense Cooperation:
- Strong **political relations** are evident through increased **defense collaborations**.
- India's participation in the **I2U2 grouping** (India, Israel, UAE, US) reflects its focus on **economic and security cooperation** in the region.
- Enhanced ties with **Italy** include agreements on **maritime security**, **information sharing**, and **defense production**.

4. Economic and Trade Partnerships:
- Bilateral trade with Mediterranean nations has reached **USD 80 billion annually**, with sectors like:
  - **Fertilizers, energy, water technology, defense, and cyber capabilities** leading the charge.
- Indian companies are investing in infrastructure projects, including **airports, ports, railways**, and **green hydrogen** initiatives.

5. Enhanced Connectivity:
- The **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**, launched in 2023, aims to bolster **connectivity** between India, the **Middle East**, and **Europe**, involving nations like **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel**.

6. Cultural and Diaspora Links:
- The Mediterranean is home to a **460,000-strong Indian diaspora**, with **40% residing in Italy**.
- This diaspora strengthens **cultural ties** and fosters better understanding between India and Mediterranean countries.

Key Challenges in India-Mediterranean Relations:

1. Geopolitical Instability:
- Persistent conflicts, such as the **Israel-Palestine issue** and tensions in **Syria and Libya**, hinder diplomatic progress.

- The success of initiatives like **IMEC** depends on resolving these regional disputes.

2. Energy Security:

- The Mediterranean region is vital for **India's energy imports**, including **oil and gas** from **North Africa** and the **Middle East**.
- Ensuring **stable energy supplies** amid regional volatility and advancing **renewable energy** partnerships are critical priorities.

3. Regional Security Concerns

- Challenges such as **piracy**, **illicit maritime activities**, and regional conflicts demand collaborative efforts to ensure **freedom of navigation**.
- India's balanced diplomacy, including its **call for a ceasefire** in West Asia and support for a **two-state solution** in the Israel-Palestine conflict, showcases its commitment to **peace and stability**.

Conclusion and Way Forward:

India's engagement with the Mediterranean region spans **economic, strategic, and cultural dimensions**, offering significant opportunities for mutual growth.

Priority Areas for Strengthening Relations:

- Enhancing **geopolitical stability**.
- Promoting **economic integration** and **infrastructure development**.
- Securing **energy supplies** and advancing **renewable energy partnerships**.
- Supporting the **Indian diaspora**.
- Proactively addressing **regional conflicts** through balanced diplomacy.

Through initiatives like **IMEC** and strengthened diplomatic efforts, India can enhance its role in fostering the **stability, prosperity**, and **integration** of the Mediterranean region while advancing its own global interests.

3 Sambhal Mosque Dispute: Legal Battle and Rising Communal Tensions

Context: The **Sambhal Mosque Dispute** has reignited debates around **religious identity, historical claims**, and **legal protections** in India. Violence erupted in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, following a district court's order to survey the **Shahi Jama Masjid**, leading to fatalities and raising concerns about communal harmony.

Why Is This in the News?

A **district court in Sambhal** ordered a survey of the **Shahi Jama Masjid**, triggering violence that resulted in at least four deaths and several injuries. Allegations of **police excesses** and procedural lapses have intensified tensions in the region.

Understanding the Sambhal Mosque Dispute

Background of the Controversy:
- The dispute stems from a **petition** alleging that the **16th-century Jama Masjid** was constructed over an ancient **Hari Har Mandir**.
- Petitioners demanded a **survey to determine the site's historical and religious character**, akin to similar claims about sites in **Varanasi, Mathura, and Dhar**.
- The **Shahi Jama Masjid**, classified as a **Monument of National Importance** under the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904**, is under the purview of the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, making it a **sensitive legal and cultural issue**.

Court-Ordered Surveys and Unrest:
- A **photographic and videographic survey** was initially conducted without incident, with cooperation from authorities and mosque representatives.
- However, a **subsequent survey** led to violent clashes when a petitioner arrived with **chanting crowds**, sparking protests near the mosque.
- **Allegations of police violence** emerged, with reports of five deaths, including teenagers. Locals accused the police of **using excessive force** and **damaging property**, though the police denied these claims.

Local Concerns Over Legal Proceedings:
- Critics argue the **survey order** was issued without determining the **admissibility** of the claims.
- The survey began before higher courts could review the order, raising concerns about **procedural fairness**.

Historical Context of the Shahi Jama Masjid

Architectural and Historical Significance
- Built during **Babur's reign** (1526–1530) by his general **Mir Hindu Beg**, the mosque is an early example of **Mughal architecture**.
- Features include:
  o A **square prayer hall** with a dome.
  o Arches and stone masonry resembling structures in **Budaun**.
- The mosque underwent repairs during the reigns of **Jahangir and Shah Jahan**.

Debated Origins:
- Some scholars suggest it has **Tughlaq-era origins**, with **Babur adding modifications**.
- Local traditions claim the mosque incorporates remnants of a **Vishnu temple**, believed to be the site of the arrival of **Kalki, the tenth avatar of Vishnu**.

Legal Context of the Shahi Jama Masjid

Places of Worship Act, 1991
- The **1991 Act** mandates maintaining the **religious character** of all sites as of **August 15, 1947**, except the **Babri Masjid case**.
- **Key Provision**: Section 3 bars the **conversion of places of worship** into sites for different religious groups.
- **Objective**: To preserve India's **secular fabric** and prevent conflicts over religious sites.

Challenges to the Act
- The **Sambhal petition** challenges the Act by seeking a **change in the mosque's religious character**.
- Petitioners cite remarks by **Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud**, suggesting that ascertaining the **religious character** of a site may not necessarily violate the Act.
- The Act is under review in multiple cases, including disputes in **Varanasi, Mathura**, and now **Sambhal**.

4 Supreme Court Seeks Report on Pennaiyar River Water Dispute

Context: The **Supreme Court** has directed the **Union Government** to submit a report prepared by the **Negotiation Committee** addressing the ongoing **water-sharing dispute** between **Tamil Nadu** and **Karnataka** over the **Pennaiyar River**.

Background of the Dispute:
- The dispute is being addressed under the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.
- **Karnataka** initiated negotiations in **May 2023** after a new state government was formed, marking a shift toward dialogue and mediation.
- **Tamil Nadu** approached the Supreme Court in **2018** challenging Karnataka's construction of **check dams** and diversion structures, arguing:
  - These actions harm water-dependent populations in Tamil Nadu.
  - They violate national water-sharing principles.
- Tamil Nadu cited an **1892 agreement**, asserting its **validity and binding nature**, and emphasized that the term **"river"** includes **tributaries, streams**, and other connected water sources.

Supreme Court's Role:
- In **January 2023**, the **Supreme Court** directed the **Union Government** to form a **Negotiation Committee** under **Section 4 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.
- The committee's mandate was to find a **mutually agreeable resolution**.
- The Supreme Court has now sought the committee's **report**, which will detail progress and provide an in-depth analysis of the issue.

Understanding Inter-State River Water Disputes:
Constitutional Provisions:
- **Article 262** of the Constitution provides for the **adjudication** of inter-state water disputes.
- Under this Article:
  - Parliament may legislate to address **use, distribution, and control** of inter-state rivers and their valleys.
  - Parliament may restrict the jurisdiction of the **Supreme Court** or any other court in these disputes.

Key Laws:
1. **River Boards Act, 1956**:
   - Allows the establishment of **River Boards** by the Central Government for regulation and development of inter-state rivers.
   - Boards are created at the request of concerned states to advise on water management.
2. **Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956**:
   - Empowers the Central Government to establish **ad hoc tribunals** for adjudication of disputes.
   - The tribunal's decision is **final and binding**.
   - Courts, including the Supreme Court, cannot intervene in matters referred to a tribunal.

Amendments to the Inter-State Water Disputes Act:
- A **2002 amendment** introduced significant changes:
  - Tribunals must be constituted within **one year** of a state's request.
  - Awards must be delivered within **three years**, extendable to **five years** in exceptional cases.
  - Awards hold the same authority as a **Supreme Court order**.
  - States can still approach the Supreme Court under **Article 136** (Special Leave Petition) or **Article 21** (Right to Life) for private grievances.

About the Pennaiyar River:
- Also known as **Dakshina Pinakini** (Kannada) and **Thenpennai** or **Pennaiyar** (Tamil).
- **Length**: 497 km (second longest river in Tamil Nadu after the Kaveri).

- **Cities on Banks**: Bangalore, Hosur, Tiruvannamalai, and Cuddalore.
- **Origin**: Nandi Hills, Karnataka.
- **Destination**: Bay of Bengal.
- The river suffers from severe **pollution** due to industrial waste from Bangalore, Hosur, and Chengam.

Significance of the Issue:

The **Pennaiyar River** is a critical water source for both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Ensuring a fair and sustainable resolution is vital for the agricultural and industrial communities relying on its waters.

Top of Form

5 India Signs the Final Act of the Riyadh Design Law Treaty

Context: India has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening its **intellectual property (IP)** ecosystem by signing the **Riyadh Design Law Treaty (DLT)**. This move aligns with India's vision of promoting **inclusive growth** and fostering innovation across industries.

About the Riyadh Design Law Treaty

Background:

- The treaty, finalized after nearly **two decades of negotiations** under the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, aims to streamline and harmonize the procedural frameworks for **industrial design protection** globally.
- Its focus is on improving the **efficiency** and **accessibility** of design registration processes across multiple jurisdictions.

Objective:

- The treaty ensures that **streamlined design protection benefits** are available to all stakeholders, especially:
  - **Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)**
  - **Startups**
  - **Independent designers**

Key Provisions of the Riyadh Design Law Treaty:

1. **Relaxed Time Limits**:
   - Flexible timelines for completing procedural requirements.
   - Provision for the **reinstatement of lost rights**.
2. **Priority Claims**:
   - Allows applicants to **correct or add priority claims** post-application.
3. **Simplified Processes**:
   - Streamlined procedures for recording **assignments** and **licenses**.
   - Enables the filing of **multiple designs** within a single application.
4. **Encouragement for Digital Systems**:
   - Promotes the adoption of **electronic design systems**.
   - Facilitates the **electronic exchange** of priority documents.

India's Initiatives for Safeguarding IPR

India has taken significant steps to establish a robust **intellectual property rights (IPR)** framework:

National IPR Policy, 2016:

- A comprehensive document encompassing all forms of **IPRs**.
- Establishes an **institutional mechanism** for implementation, monitoring, and periodic review.

Key Programs and Policies:

1. **Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM)**:
   - Coordinates the execution of the National IPR Policy.
2. **National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM)**:
   - A flagship initiative to impart **IP awareness and training** in educational institutions.
3. **Startup Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP)**:
   - Provides support to **startups** for protecting and managing their **IP assets**.
   - Encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

Why Intellectual Property Matters?

- **Definition**: Intellectual Property (IP) encompasses **creations of the mind**, such as inventions, artistic works, designs, and symbols used in commerce.

- **Purpose**: Protected under laws like **patents, copyrights, and trademarks**, IP allows innovators to earn recognition and financial benefits while fostering an environment for **creativity and innovation**.

Types of Intellectual Property:

1. **Patent**: Exclusive rights granted for **new inventions** offering technical solutions to problems.
2. **Copyright**: Protects the rights of creators over **literary and artistic works**.
3. **Trademark**: Distinguishes the goods or services of one entity from others using a **unique sign**.
4. **Industrial Design**: Protects the **ornamental or aesthetic aspects** of an article.
5. **Geographical Indications (GIs)**: Identifies products with specific **qualities or reputations** linked to their geographic origin.
6. **Trade Secrets**: Rights over **confidential information**, which can be sold or licensed.

Concluding Remarks:

India's signing of the **Riyadh Design Law Treaty** marks a significant step in strengthening its **IPR framework**. Combined with initiatives like the **Startup India program** and **SIPP scheme**, these measures will empower **startups** and **SMEs**, enhancing their competitiveness and supporting their growth in the global market.

6 Women Pioneers of India's Constitution

Context: On **Constitution Day** (November 26), **President Droupadi Murmu** celebrated the contributions of women in the **Constituent Assembly**.

Out of 299 members, **15 women** were part of the Assembly (two later resigned). These women represented diverse regions and perspectives, actively participating in debates on **gender equality, caste**, and **reservations**.

While prominent names like **Sarojini Naidu**, **Sucheta Kripalani**, and **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit** are widely known, lesser-known women also made significant contributions.

This article highlights the remarkable contributions of **five pioneering women**.

Ammu Swaminathan: Champion of Gender Equality:
- **Background**: Hailing from **Palakkad, Kerala**, Ammu Swaminathan married Subbarama Swaminathan under conditions of personal independence. Her daughter was **Captain Lakshmi Sahgal** of the Indian National Army.
- **Journey into Politics**: Inspired by the restrictive widowhood practices her mother endured, she joined the **freedom movement** and contested elections on a **Congress ticket**.
- **Role in the Constituent Assembly**:
  o Advocated for the **Hindu Code Bill** and **gender equality** in the face of resistance.
  o Promoted women's rights in a male-dominated Assembly.
- **Post-Independence Contributions**:
  o Elected from **Dindigul, Tamil Nadu**.
  o Served as India's goodwill ambassador to **Russia, China**, and the **US**.

Annie Mascarene: Voice for Universal Franchise
- **Early Life**: Born into a Latin Christian family in **Travancore**, she overcame caste barriers to excel academically, becoming a lawyer and educator.
- **Political Career**:
  o Joined the **Travancore State Congress**, championing **universal adult franchise** and enduring violence for her beliefs.
  o Advocated for a **strong Centre** while supporting **local government autonomy**.
- **Achievements**: As an independent candidate, she became the **first woman MP** from **Thiruvananthapuram** in 1952.

Begum Qudsia Aizaz Rasul: Advocate for Unity
- **Early Life**: Born into Punjab's **royal family**, she pursued education despite opposition, even facing a **fatwa** for attending a convent school.
- **Political Journey**:
  o Entered politics after marriage, discarding the **purdah**.
  o Won a non-reserved seat in 1936, despite societal criticism.
- **Role in the Constituent Assembly**:
  o Opposed **separate electorates** based on religion, arguing for national unity.
  o Opted to stay in India post-Partition, advocating for the rights of **poor Muslims**.
- **Later Contributions**:
  o Joined the **Congress** and served in the **Rajya Sabha**.
  o Played a key role in promoting **women's hockey**.

Dakshayani Velayudhan: A Pioneer for Dalit Rights
- **Background**: Born into the **Pulaya community** in **Cochin**, she became the first Dalit woman to graduate in science.
- **Breaking Barriers**:

- o Endured discrimination in college, where she was excluded from practical experiments.
  - o Married a social worker in a simple wedding attended by **Mahatma Gandhi** and **Kasturba**.
- **Constituent Assembly Role**:
  - o Opposed **separate electorates** for Dalits, advocating for national integration.
  - o Championed equality and **Dalit rights**.
- **Later Life**:
  - o Financial constraints limited her political career, but she remained active in the **Dalit movement**.

Renuka Ray: Advocate for Women's Empowerment:
- **Early Life**: Born in **Pabna** (now in Bangladesh), she joined the **freedom movement** under Mahatma Gandhi's inspiration.
- **Education and Activism**:
  - o Studied at the **London School of Economics**, where she met her husband.
  - o Focused on **divorce** and **inheritance laws**, representing women's organizations in the **Central Legislative Assembly**.
- **Contributions in the Constituent Assembly**:
  - o Supported the **Hindu Code Bill**.
  - o Opposed reserved seats for women, believing they hindered progress.
- **Later Career**:
  - o Won the **1957 general election** from **Hooghly**.
  - o Contributed to governance in Bengal and social justice initiatives.

Conclusion:

These remarkable women brought unique perspectives to the **Constituent Assembly**, shaping modern India's constitutional framework. Their contributions—rooted in advocacy for **equality, unity**, and **justice**—continue to inspire generations.