



Daily Current Affairs



To The Point

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1 Cabinet Approves Revised Waqf Bill (2024) with Key Reforms

Context: The Union Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister of India, has approved the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, incorporating key recommendations from the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The bill aims to improve the regulation and administration of waqf properties, ensuring greater transparency and efficiency.



Background:

The Waqf Act, 1995, governs the management of waqf properties, which are charitable endowments made by Muslims for religious, educational, or philanthropic purposes.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has been introduced to:

- Address challenges in regulating waqf properties.
- Curb encroachments and prevent misuse of waqf lands.
- Enhance governance and increase accountability in waqf boards.

Key Amendments in the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024:

1. Strengthening Regulation of Waqf Properties:

- Tightens legal measures to prevent illegal encroachments and unauthorized use of waqf land.
- Aims to streamline administration and improve governance of waqf institutions.

2. Administrative Reforms:

- The Survey Commissioner's functions will now be carried out by the Collector or an officer of Deputy Collector rank for waqf property surveys.
- This change is expected to speed up the survey process and reduce bureaucratic delays.

3. Increased Government Oversight:

- Expands the role of central and state governments in supervising waqf boards.
- May introduce measures to address inefficiencies in waqf management.

4. Promoting Transparency and Accountability:

- Enhances the role of waqf boards in record-keeping and governance.
- Introduces mandatory digitization of waqf property records to minimize corruption.

Key Changes Recommended by the JPC:

1. Inclusion of Women and OBC Members:

- Mandates the inclusion of two Muslim women in both:
 - State Waqf Boards (Section 14)
 - Central Waqf Council (Section 9)
- This move aims to empower women and ensure their participation in waqf management.
- Additionally, one Muslim OBC member will now be part of State Waqf Boards.

2. Special Waqf Boards for Aghakhani & Bohra Communities:



- Allows states to set up **separate waqf boards** for the **Aghakhani and Bohra communities** to address **their unique concerns**.

3. Protecting Women's Inheritance Rights:

- Ensures that in **family waqfs (Waqf Alal Aulad)**, **women's inheritance rights** are **safeguarded**.
- The **waqif (donor)** can **only dedicate property** after ensuring that **female heirs receive their rightful share**.

4. Faster Dispute Resolution:

- District collectors** will now **handle disputes** over whether a property belongs to **waqf or the government**.
- This aims to **speed up dispute resolution** and **prevent unnecessary legal delays**.

5. Integration of Technology:

- Emphasizes **technology-driven governance** in managing **waqf records**.
- All waqf property details** must be uploaded to a **centralized online portal** within **six months** for **better transparency**.

Understanding the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):

- A **temporary parliamentary body** created for the **detailed scrutiny** of a specific bill or issue.
- Includes **members from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**, representing **both ruling and opposition parties**.
- It is **dissolved** once its assigned task is completed.

Concerns and Challenges:

1. State vs. Central Authority Over Waqf Properties:

- Some fear **excessive centralization** may **reduce the autonomy** of **state waqf boards**.

2. Potential Legal & Constitutional Issues:

- If the bill **contradicts existing property laws** or **religious rights**, it could lead to **judicial challenges**.
- Questions may arise over **compensation for landowners** affected by **waqf claims**.

3. Reactions from Minority Communities:

- Since waqf plays a crucial role in **Muslim religious and social institutions**, any perceived **government control** may **spark opposition** from religious groups.

4. Bureaucratic Hurdles:

- While reforms aim to **curb corruption**, increased **government oversight** could **slow down decision-making** and create **administrative delays**.

Conclusion:

The **Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024**, introduces **major reforms** to **enhance transparency, governance, and women's participation** in waqf institutions. However, concerns remain over **centralization, legal challenges, and minority rights**.

If implemented effectively, these changes can help **modernize waqf administration, protect waqf assets, and empower underrepresented communities**.

2 India Needs Tariff Cuts & Reforms to Attract Investments: World Bank

Context: The World Bank, in its latest report "India Country Economic Memorandum," has emphasized the need for **accelerated reforms** to help India achieve an **average annual growth rate of 7.8%** and attain **high-income status by 2047**.

**India's Economic Progress:**

- Since **2000**, India's **real GDP** has **quadrupled**, and **GDP per capita** has **nearly tripled**.
- The country's **global economic share** has **doubled** from **1.6% in 2000** to **3.4% in 2023**.
- India is now the **world's fifth-largest economy** and continues to **outpace global growth trends**.

Key Insights from the World Bank Report:**1. Pathway to High-Income Status by 2047:**

- Achieving this goal requires **ambitious economic reforms** and **consistent growth** (building on the **6.3% average growth rate from 2000-2024**).
- **Global Case Studies:** Countries like **Chile, South Korea, and Poland** successfully transitioned to **high-income status** through **deep global economic integration**.

2. Growth Scenarios for 2047:

To sustain **rapid and inclusive economic growth**, India must:

- **Increase total investment** from **33.5% to 40% of GDP by 2035**.
- **Raise labor force participation** from **56.4% to over 65%** (current levels remain low compared to **Vietnam (73%)** and **Philippines (60%)**).
- **Accelerate productivity growth** across key sectors.
- **Boost Gross National Income (GNI) per capita** nearly **eightfold**, requiring a **higher and sustained growth rate**.

3. Harnessing the Demographic Dividend:

- Investing in **human capital development** is crucial.
- **Creating high-quality jobs** is essential to absorb India's large workforce.
- **Female labor force participation** needs to increase from **35.6% to 50% by 2047** to unlock India's full economic potential.

Key Policy Actions for Accelerated Growth:**1. Boost Investments:**

- Strengthen **financial sector regulations** to improve stability.
- **Ease credit access** for **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**.
- **Simplify Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policies** to attract global investors.

2. Job Creation for Inclusive Growth:

- Focus on **job-rich industries** such as **agro-processing, hospitality, and tourism**.
- Invest in **skilling programs** to align with evolving job market demands.

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- Foster an **innovation-driven economy** to create **high-value jobs**.

3. Structural Economic Transformation:

- **Shift labor and resources** from low-productivity sectors to **high-growth industries** like manufacturing and services.
- Enhance **infrastructure development** to support **business expansion**.
- **Streamline labor regulations** to promote a more **efficient and dynamic workforce**.

4. State-Level Growth Acceleration:

- **Tailored policies** for different states:
 - **Less-developed states** should focus on **basic infrastructure and institutional reforms**.
 - **More developed states** should concentrate on **advanced economic policies and integration into Global Value Chains (GVCs)**.
- **Federal Support Mechanisms**:
 - Programs like the **Urban Challenge Fund** should be expanded to **incentivize economic transformation** in low-income states.
 - **Improve public expenditure efficiency** to maximize growth benefits.

Conclusion:

India is on a **strong growth trajectory**, but achieving **high-income status by 2047** requires **bold reforms, increased investments, and structural transformations**. By focusing on **labor force expansion, economic integration, and digital innovation**, India can solidify its position as a **global economic powerhouse**.

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3

Aditya-L1 Captures Groundbreaking Solar Flare Insights

Context: Aditya-L1, India's first space-based **solar observatory**, has achieved a **major breakthrough** by capturing the **first-ever image of a solar flare 'kernel'** in the **lower solar atmosphere** (photosphere and chromosphere). This discovery provides **unprecedented insights** into the Sun's dynamic activity.



About Aditya-L1:

- Launched in **September 2023** aboard ISRO's PSLV C-57 rocket.
- Successfully placed in a **halo orbit around the Earth-Sun Lagrange Point (L1)** in January 2024.
- Positioned **1.5 million km from Earth**, facing the **Sun**—about **1% of the total Earth-Sun distance**.
- Unlike other missions, it will **not land on or move closer to the Sun** but will observe its **outer atmosphere** from a stable vantage point.

Did You Know?

- The name "**Aditya**" means "**Sun**" in Sanskrit, while "**L1**" refers to **Lagrange Point 1** in the **Sun-Earth system**.
- **L1** is a unique point where the **gravitational pull** of the Earth and the Sun balances, allowing Aditya-L1 to remain stable.
- This strategic position enables **continuous solar observation** without any **eclipses or obstructions**.

Scientific Instruments & Their Role:

1. Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT):

- Captures **high-resolution images** in **11 different Near Ultraviolet (NUV) bands**.
- Helps in studying **multiple layers** of the Sun's atmosphere.

2. Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS) & High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HEL1OS):

- Monitor **solar X-ray emissions**.
- Detect and analyze **solar flare activities** in real-time.

Significance of the Discovery:

- The mission has **validated long-standing theories** about **solar flare physics**.
- It confirms the **link between localized brightening in the lower atmosphere** and a **rise in plasma temperature in the solar corona**.
- This breakthrough could improve **space weather predictions** and enhance our understanding of **solar storms**, which impact **satellite operations, GPS systems, and power grids** on Earth.

Conclusion:

With **Aditya-L1's** latest findings, **India has taken a giant leap in solar research**, contributing valuable data to the **global scientific community**. This mission is set to **unlock more secrets of the Sun**, paving the way for **future space explorations and advancements in astrophysics**.

4 India Achieves Milestone: 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) Established

Context: The Union Government has successfully met its ambitious goal of setting up **10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** under its **flagship scheme**. Marking this achievement, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **10,000th FPO** in **Bhagalpur, Bihar**, focusing on key crops such as **maize, banana, and paddy**.



About the Scheme:

- Launched in **2020**, the **Central Sector Scheme for the Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs** aims to **strengthen small and marginal farmers** by encouraging collectivization.
- The scheme has a **budget outlay of 6,865 crore**, covering support until **2027-28**.
- Over 30 lakh farmers** are now associated with FPOs, with **women making up 40%** of the beneficiaries.

Objectives of the Scheme:

- Support & Handholding:** Each FPO receives **assistance for up to five years** to ensure sustainability.
- Capacity Building:** Farmers are trained in **entrepreneurship, modern farming techniques, and market strategies** to improve productivity and profitability.

What Are FPOs?

A **Farmer Producer Organization (FPO)** is a **legally registered collective** of farmers who come together to improve production, processing, and marketing of agricultural goods.

- Registered under **Part IXA of the Companies Act** or **state-specific Cooperative Societies Acts**.
- The **Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)**, under the **Ministry of Agriculture**, plays a vital role in supporting FPO formation.

Why Are FPOs Needed?

India's agriculture is dominated by **small, marginal, and landless farmers**, who face multiple challenges:

- Limited access** to quality seeds, fertilizers, and technology.
- Financial constraints** prevent investment in mechanization and modern farming.
- Weak market negotiation power**, leading to low selling prices.
- Lack of infrastructure** for storage, transport, and logistics.

FPOs help solve these problems by **collectivizing small farmers**, increasing their **bargaining power**, and giving them access to **better resources, financial support, and direct market linkages**.

Key Services Provided by FPOs:

- Supply of Inputs:** Providing quality seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides at affordable rates.
- Access to Machinery:** Renting modern equipment like **cultivators, tillers, and harvesters** to reduce production costs.
- Value Addition & Processing:** Cleaning, sorting, grading, and packing agricultural produce.
- Logistics Support:** Offering storage, transportation, and loading/unloading facilities.



- **Better Market Access:** Aggregating produce to negotiate **higher prices** from buyers and ensure fair compensation.

Challenges Faced by FPOs:

- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Complex compliance and registration processes.
- **Weak Infrastructure:** Lack of storage, processing, and transport facilities.
- **Farmer Participation Issues:** Some FPOs struggle with **low engagement** and internal governance problems.
- **Limited Technology Adoption:** Need for greater **digital integration** in farming operations.
- **Climate & Market Risks:** Vulnerability to **weather changes and fluctuating market prices**.

The Road Ahead:

The establishment of **10,000 FPOs** marks a **transformational moment** for Indian agriculture. By promoting **collectivization, enhancing market access, and providing financial support**, this initiative has **empowered millions of small and marginal farmers**, including **women and economically weaker sections**.

Moving forward, **strengthening infrastructure, increasing digital adoption, and ensuring policy support** will be key to making FPOs a **sustainable and long-term success story** in India's agricultural sector.

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5 Rahul Gandhi Slams Centre Over Vacancies in National SC Commission

Context Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, has strongly criticized the **BJP-led Union government** for the persistent **vacancies in the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**. He labeled it as "**proof of the BJP government's anti-Dalit mentality**." In a social media post, he accused the government of **deliberately neglecting the NCSC**, leaving key positions unfilled for over a year. He urged the **Prime Minister to take immediate action** to fill the vacancies.



Vacancies in the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):

The **7th National Commission for Scheduled Castes** was established on **March 9, 2024**, yet critical posts remain vacant:

- **Vice-Chairperson** – Not appointed.
- **One Member** – Position still unfilled.

As per the **Constitution**, the NCSC must have a **Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and three Members**.

The last time all positions were **fully occupied** was during the **5th Commission (2017-2020)** under **Ram Shankar Katheria**.

Other Key Vacancies in NCSC:

- **Law Officer for the Legal Cell** – Position remains empty.
- **Several Section Officer Posts** – Yet to be filled.

An NCSC official stated that the **Commission is unable to comment on vacancy-related issues**.

Vacancies in Other National Commissions:

National Commission for Other Backward Classes (NCBC):

- **Vice-Chairperson** – Position vacant.
- **At least two members missing**.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST):

- **Vice-Chairperson** – Yet to be appointed.

Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities

- **Position unfilled for over five years**.
- **Disability Department Secretary handling additional charge**.

National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK):

- **Until January 2025, four out of five positions were vacant**.
- **Currently has Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and two members**.
- **Requires five members as per mandate**.

Governance and Constitutional Concerns:

These commissions play a **vital role in safeguarding the rights of marginalized communities**.

- **Persistent vacancies weaken their effectiveness** and delay critical policy decisions.



- Reflects **administrative neglect** and raises questions about **governance efficiency**.
- The issue was flagged in **Parliament (December 2024)** but remains **unresolved**.
- About the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

Introduction:

- **The NCSC is a constitutional body** established under **Article 338** of the Indian Constitution.
- It is responsible for **protecting the rights and interests of Scheduled Castes (SCs)**.

Composition:

- **Chairperson**
- **Vice-Chairperson**
- **Three Members**

All members are **appointed by the President of India**.

Functions and Powers:

- **Monitor & Investigate Issues** – Related to SCs' constitutional safeguards.
- **Handle Complaints** – Inquire into **violations of SC rights**.
- **Policy Advisory Role** – Participate in **policy planning** and recommend measures for SC welfare.
- **Report to the President** – Present **annual and special reports** on SC conditions.
- **Suggest Development Measures** – Recommend strategies for **socio-economic upliftment** of SC communities.

Conclusion:

The **vacancies in NCSC and other national commissions** highlight a **serious governance gap** in ensuring social justice.

With the **NCSC's mandate to protect Scheduled Castes' rights**, filling these positions must be a **top priority** for the government.

Timely appointments and proper functioning of these commissions are crucial for safeguarding the interests of marginalized communities.

6 Congress Pushes for 'Bottom-Up Approach' to Reduce Inequality

Context: The Congress Party has emphasized the need for a **policy shift** from **corporate favoritism** to **grassroots economic empowerment** to combat **rising inequality and low consumption** in India. The party argues that **economic policies** should **prioritize rural incomes** rather than catering to **big businesses**.



Key Concerns:

- **Low Consumption Levels** – India's **per capita consumption** stands at **1,493**, which is **less than one-third** of China's.
- **Unequal Consumer Structure** – While **30 million wealthy households (10%)** can afford major purchases, **205 million poor households (1 billion people)** struggle to afford even **basic necessities**.

Congress's Solution: Bottom-Up Economic Growth:

- **Increase Rural Incomes** – Strengthen economic participation of the lower-income groups.
- **Enhance MGNREGA Wages** – Ensure wage hikes **outpace inflation** to sustain rural demand.
- **Focus on Local Growth** – Prioritize small businesses and agricultural sectors over **corporate tax incentives**.

What is Crony Capitalism?

Crony capitalism is an **unfair economic system** where businesses thrive **not due to efficiency or innovation**, but because of **political connections**.

Problems with Crony Capitalism

- **Unfair Market Advantage & Corruption** – Big businesses get preferential treatment, stifling competition.
- **Distorted Market Competition** – Small enterprises face **bureaucratic obstacles** while large corporations flourish.
- **Reduced Innovation & Growth** – Monopoly-like conditions discourage **new ideas and businesses**.
- **Public Distrust** – Economic policies appear **biased towards elites**, creating **social unrest**.

Example: In India, certain **industrialists** have been accused of using **political influence** to secure **land, licenses, and regulatory approvals**, while **small businesses** struggle under heavy bureaucracy.

Trickle-Down Economics: The Flawed Theory:

The **trickle-down theory** claims that **economic benefits given to the wealthy**—such as tax cuts and corporate incentives—will eventually **benefit the entire economy**.

How Trickle-Down Economics Works:

- **Lower Taxes for Businesses & the Wealthy**
- **Increased Investments & Job Creation**
- **Higher Wages & More Consumer Spending**
- **Wealth 'Trickles Down' to Lower-Income Groups**

Why Trickle-Down Fails:

- **Wealth Hoarding** – The rich **accumulate wealth** rather than reinvesting it into the economy.
- **Slow Benefits for the Poor** – Economic gains **rarely reach** the lower-income groups.



- **Widening Inequality** – The rich get **richer**, while the poor **struggle to keep up**.

Example: The **2019 corporate tax cuts** aimed at boosting **production and job creation**, but **failed to drive substantial investment**. Instead, these cuts **reduced government revenue**, limiting funds for **public welfare programs**.

Inclusive Growth: A Sustainable Alternative:

Inclusive growth ensures that **economic benefits are distributed fairly**, particularly among the **poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged communities**.

Key Features of Inclusive Growth:

- **Employment Generation** – Focus on job creation in **small businesses, rural industries, and service sectors**.
- **Access to Quality Education & Healthcare** – Strengthen **public welfare programs**.
- **Infrastructure for All** – Ensure **equitable development** across **rural and urban regions**.
- **Fair Distribution of Resources** – Support **small farmers, MSMEs, and underprivileged communities**.

How Inclusive Growth Works:

- **Government invests in employment, rural development, education, and healthcare.**
- **Support for small businesses & rural economies strengthens economic participation.**
- **Social welfare programs uplift economically weaker sections.**
- **Balanced policies ensure both public and private sectors contribute to growth.**

Benefits of Inclusive Growth:

- **Reduces Inequality** – Ensures **widespread prosperity** instead of concentrating wealth at the top.
- **Boosts Consumer Demand** – Higher rural incomes **increase purchasing power**.
- **Sustainable Economic Growth** – Focuses on **long-term economic stability** over **short-term corporate gains**.
- **Stronger Social Unity** – Reduces economic disparity, **preventing social unrest**.

Example: **MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)** has played a **crucial role in rural job creation**, ensuring **livelihood security** for millions.

Conclusion:

The **Congress Party's advocacy for a 'Bottom-Up Approach'** calls for a **shift away from crony capitalism** towards **inclusive economic policies**. Strengthening **rural incomes, expanding social programs, and ensuring fair economic participation** will **boost consumption, reduce inequality, and drive sustainable growth**.