



Daily Current Affairs



To The Point

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1 President Highlights the Role of Mediation in Reducing Judicial Burden

Context: At the first National Mediation Conference organized by the Mediation Association of India (MIA), the President of India strongly emphasized the growing importance of **mediation** as a tool to resolve disputes, reduce litigation costs, and ease the **overburdened court system**.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a **voluntary, confidential, and non-adversarial** process where a **neutral third party** (mediator) assists disputing individuals or parties in arriving at a **mutually acceptable solution**.

It is one of the key pillars of **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**, alongside:

- Arbitration
- Conciliation
- Negotiation



India's Judicial Backlog: A Crisis in Numbers

The Indian judiciary is currently struggling under a **mountain of pending cases**:

- **5.1 crore+ total pending cases** (as of 2024)
 - 71,000 in the Supreme Court
 - 60 lakh in High Courts
 - 4.5 crore in District and Subordinate Courts
- **Judge Vacancy:** Out of ~25,000 sanctioned judges, only ~20,000 are in place (~20% shortfall)
- **Judge-to-population ratio:** Only **21 judges per million**, far short of the Law Commission's recommendation of 50 per million

Why Mediation Matters:

Mediation offers a practical, humane, and sustainable approach to dispute resolution:

- **Reduces Court Pendency:** Ideal for minor **civil, commercial, and family** disputes
- **Time-Efficient:** Resolutions are often reached within a **few sessions**
- **Cost-Effective:** Cuts down on **legal fees** and **court expenses**
- **Relationship-Friendly:** Preserves **personal and business ties**
- **Empowering:** Parties retain **control over the outcome**, rather than having a solution imposed

Legal and Institutional Support:

Mediation in India is supported by several key **laws and frameworks**:

- **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987:** Created **Lok Adalats** using mediation-like techniques
- **Section 89, Civil Procedure Code (1908):** Courts **mandated** to refer cases for ADR
- **Mediation Act, 2023** (Landmark legislation)
 - **Mandatory pre-litigation mediation** in civil & commercial matters
 - Formation of the **Mediation Council of India (MCI)** for:



- Standardizing training & accreditation
- Regulating mediation institutions
- Monitoring mediator conduct and case outcomes

Mediation in Current Legal & Commercial Disputes:

- **Commercial Courts Act, 2015:** Fast-tracks commercial cases above ₹3 lakh and promotes **pre-litigation mediation**
- **Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996** (with 2015, 2019, 2021 amendments): Encourages **binding arbitration**, both **ad hoc** and **institutional**
- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019:** Emphasizes **mediation** as a primary dispute resolution tool
- **Singapore Convention on Mediation:** India's participation paves the way for **cross-border enforcement** of mediated settlements

The Way Forward:

To make mediation a **mainstream judicial tool**, India must:

1. **Strengthen Legal Infrastructure:** Ensure **uniform and effective implementation** of the Mediation Act, 2023
2. **Boost Awareness:** Launch nationwide **mediation literacy campaigns**
3. **Train Mediators:** Scale up **capacity building** with standardized **certification**
4. **Judicial Backing:** Encourage **active referrals by judges** to mediation centers
5. **Go Digital:** Promote **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)** for convenience and speed
6. **Track Progress:** Build **national databases** to assess mediation outcomes and their impact on court backlog

Conclusion:

The President's address underscores a **pivotal shift** in India's legal landscape. **Mediation is not merely an alternative**—it is an **essential path** to **accessible, timely, and empathetic justice**. As India advances, a **robust mediation ecosystem** can transform how we resolve conflicts, preserve relationships, and uphold the rule of law.

2 Genome-Edited Rice Varieties: India's Leap Toward a Second Green Revolution

Context: In a landmark announcement, the **Union Agriculture Minister** introduced **two genome-edited rice varieties**, signaling a **new era in agricultural innovation** that could ignite the **Second Green Revolution** in India.

What is Genome Editing?

Genome editing is a cutting-edge biotechnological method that enables **precise alterations in the DNA** of living organisms. The most notable tool in this domain is:

- **CRISPR-Cas9** (*Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats – associated protein 9*):
 - Acts like **molecular scissors** to remove, insert, or modify genetic material with pinpoint accuracy.
 - Unlike **Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)**, it doesn't require **foreign DNA** insertion, making it more **biologically natural and acceptable** under Indian biosafety regulations.

In India, **SDN-1** and **SDN-2** techniques (which do not introduce foreign genes) are permitted for general crops.

India's First Genome-Edited Rice Varieties:

Developed by **ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research)**, the two new varieties are:

- **DRR Rice 100 (Kamla)**
- **Pusa DST Rice 1**

These are outcomes of CRISPR-based research that began in 2018 under the **National Agricultural Science Fund**, targeting **Samba Mahsuri** and **MTU 1010** rice lines.

Benefits of Genome-Edited Rice:

Impact Area	Benefit
Yield	19% increase
Water Use	Saves 7,500 million cubic meters of irrigation water
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	20% reduction , especially in methane
Climate Resilience	Tolerant to drought, salinity, and heat
Pest & Disease Resistance	Less dependence on chemical pesticides & fertilizers

Understanding CRISPR Technology:

- Inspired by **natural bacterial immunity**, CRISPR identifies and destroys **invading viral DNA**.
- In agriculture, it helps in:
 - Developing **disease-resistant** crops





- Improving **nutritional quality**
- Enhancing **climate adaptability**

Path to a Second Green Revolution:

First Green Revolution	Second Green Revolution (Genome-Editing)
High-yielding wheat & rice varieties	Precision-edited, climate-resilient crops
Water-intensive, heavy chemical usage	Efficient resource use , lower environmental footprint
Increased productivity, but ecological stress	Sustainable yield with minimal ecological harm
Focused on food security	Focused on food security + climate adaptation + sustainability

Challenges & Concerns:

- **Global Regulatory Uncertainty:** Not all countries accept genome-edited crops, limiting **exports**.
- **Corporate Monopolies:** Risk of **private control** over patented technologies and seeds, raising **costs** for farmers.
- **Biodiversity Risk:** Over-reliance on select varieties could threaten **agro-genetic diversity**.

Way Forward:

1. **Boost R&D Investment:** 500 crore allocated in the **2023-24 Union Budget** for crop genome editing.
2. **Expand Public Sector Role:** ICAR is now extending genome-editing research to **oilseeds, pulses, and horticultural crops**.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage joint ventures for **responsible innovation**.
4. **Farmer & Scientist Training:** Build national capacity for **safe, inclusive use** of genome-editing tools.
5. **Streamlined Regulation:** Ensure transparent, science-based policies to **balance safety and innovation**.

Conclusion:

Genome-editing marks a **revolutionary stride** in India's agricultural transformation. With a focus on **higher yields, sustainability, and climate resilience**, these innovations can propel India into a **future of food security, farmer welfare, and eco-friendly farming**—without repeating the ecological mistakes of the past.

3 Agriphotovoltaics: Powering Farms with the Sun

Context: On **World Solar Day (May 3rd)**, attention turned to the transformative role of **solar energy in agriculture**, with **Agriphotovoltaics (APVs)** emerging as a powerful innovation to address **climate, food, and energy security**.



What are Agriphotovoltaics (APVs)?

Agriphotovoltaics refers to the **simultaneous use of land for solar energy production and agriculture** by **elevating solar panels** over crop fields. This integrated model:

- Increases **land-use efficiency**
- Creates **microclimates** for better crop resilience
- Enables **dual income streams** for farmers

Origin: Concept first introduced by German scientists **Adolf Goetzberger and Armin Zastrow in 1981**.

India's Solar Growth Milestones:

- **3450% growth** in solar capacity in a decade
- **100.33 GW** achieved as of **January 2025**
- **2024 solar boom:**
 - **24.5 GW** added (2x increase from 2023)
 - **18.5 GW** utility-scale installations

Benefits of APVs for Farmers:

Benefit Area	Details
Water Efficiency	Solar panels reduce evaporation by creating shade
Climate Resilience	Shields crops from heat and erratic weather
Stable Incomes	Lease land to solar companies or sell electricity via feed-in tariffs
Crop Growth	Suitable for shade-tolerant crops (e.g., potatoes, tomatoes, turmeric)
Income Potential	1.5 lakh/acre vs 25,000 from traditional farming in Delhi pilot

APV in Action: India's Pilot Success:

- **Najafgarh, Delhi Project:**
 - Farmer leases land for 1 lakh/acre/year
 - Dual income from **crop + solar lease** or **solar power sales**

Scaling Up APVs: Policy and Support Needed:

1. **Revamp PM-KUSUM Scheme:**
 - Integrate **APV models** into existing solarisation programs
 - Promote **grid-connected dual-use solar plants**
2. **Financial Incentives:**
 - Credit support & subsidies for **smallholder farmers** (<2 ha)



- Increase **feed-in tariffs** for APV-generated solar power

3. Farmer Training:

- Government-led programs on **APV installation & management**
- Encourage community-level **solar farming cooperatives**

4. Research & Customization:

- Expand **pilot programs** across **different agro-climatic zones**
- Develop **crop-specific APV designs**

Challenges:

Challenge	Description
Pilot-Scale Only	Currently limited to research and demonstration projects
High Initial Costs	Need for affordable financing and better risk coverage
Policy Gaps	No dedicated agrivoltaics policy in India
Lack of Awareness	Farmers and institutions unfamiliar with APV benefits

Future Outlook:

- Align APVs with India's **Net Zero** and **Doubling Farmers' Income** goals
- Integrate APVs into **national agricultural and climate strategies**
- Promote **public-private partnerships (PPPs)** to expand infrastructure
- Launch **awareness campaigns** to popularize APV potential

Conclusion: Agrivoltaics offer a **win-win model** for India: **Higher farmer incomes, climate-adaptive agriculture, and renewable energy expansion**—all from the same piece of land.

TOGETHER WE SCALE HEIGHTS

4 New Rules for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of Biodiversity – 2025

Context: The **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** has notified the **2025 ABS Regulation** to streamline **fair and equitable sharing of benefits** from the use of India's biological resources and associated traditional knowledge.

- Aligned with India's commitments under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** (amended in 2023).



What is Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)?

ABS is a global framework to:

- Regulate **access to biological resources** (plants, animals, microbes, etc.)
- Ensure **benefits are shared fairly** with local and indigenous communities who conserve and hold traditional knowledge.

Key Provisions of the 2025 Regulation:

Turnover-Based Benefit Sharing (for commercial users):

Annual Turnover	Benefit-Sharing Rate
Below 5 crore	Exempt
5–50 crore	0.2% of ex-factory annual turnover
50–250 crore	0.4% of turnover
Above 250 crore	0.6% of turnover

- Entities with **>1 crore turnover** must **file annual usage statements**.

Inclusion of Digital Sequence Information (DSI):

- DSI** now recognized under ABS—includes **genetic codes and digital data** of biological resources.
- Aligns with global consensus from **CBD COP16 (Cali, Colombia)**.

Exemptions:

- Cultivated medicinal plants** exempted—if **officially notified** by Ministry of Environment in consultation with **AYUSH Ministry**.

High-Value & Threatened Resources:

- Red sanders, sandalwood, agarwood, etc.:**
 - Minimum 5%** of sale/auction proceeds to be shared.
 - Can rise to **20%** in case of **commercial exploitation**.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):

- Mandatory disclosure of biodiversity use in patent/IP applications.
- Benefit-sharing triggered upon commercialization** of inventions using biological resources.

Distribution of Shared Benefits:



- 10–15% retained by NBA for administration.
- Remainder flows to **local communities via Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)**.

Significance of the New Rules:

Benefit Area	Explanation
Transparency	Clear, predictable benefit-sharing slabs for industries
Regulatory clarity	DSI inclusion plugs a critical legal loophole in earlier ABS frameworks
Promotes cultivation	Incentivizes farming medicinal plants over unsustainable wild harvesting
Community benefit	Ensures economic returns reach indigenous/local biodiversity custodians

Way Forward:

- Monitor implementation through **BMCs** and **State Biodiversity Boards**.
- Promote **capacity-building** for communities to assert benefit claims.
- Encourage **research and innovation** while upholding equitable sharing norms.



5 Angola: A Nation of Strategic Importance and Growing Defense Ties with India

Geopolitical Overview of Angola:

- **Capital:** Luanda
- **Location:** Southwestern Africa
- **Neighboring Countries:**
 - Republic of the Congo (North)
 - Democratic Republic of the Congo (Northeast)
 - Zambia (Southeast)
 - Namibia (South)
- **Maritime Boundary:** Atlantic Ocean (West)



Geographical Features & Natural Resources:

Angola is endowed with **rich natural resources**, which are pivotal to its economy:

- **Petroleum, diamonds, iron ore, phosphates, copper, feldspar, gold, bauxite, and uranium.**
- Major **rivers** include the **Zambezi, Cuango** (Kwango), and **Cuanza** (Kwanza) rivers. The **Cuango River** forms part of the boundary between Angola and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.

Climate:

- **Tropical Climate** with a marked dry season. The climate is influenced by the **cold Benguela Current**, which flows northwards along the **southern African coast**, bringing cooler air and affecting precipitation patterns.

Angola-India Defense Relations:

- Recently, **India** announced a **\$200 million defense credit line** to Angola, marking a significant step in strengthening defense and strategic ties between the two nations.

Extra Insight: Angola's Strategic Position in Africa

Angola, with its strategic location in **southern Africa**, plays a critical role in the region's **geopolitics**. As one of Africa's largest oil producers, Angola has become a vital partner for energy, trade, and defense relations, especially with countries like **India, China, and Russia**. The increasing **defense collaboration** highlights Angola's growing importance as a security partner in the **African continent**.

6

The Satavahana Dynasty: A Glimpse into Ancient Deccan Culture and Politics

Context: Recently, the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** uncovered **11 ancient inscriptions** in **Peddapalli, Telangana**, which are attributed to the **Satavahana dynasty**. These inscriptions, dating from the **1st BCE to the 6th CE**, are written in **Brahmi script** and **Prakrit language**, offering valuable insights into the political, cultural, and religious practices of the era. These findings also confirm **Telangana's historical ties to Asmaka**, one of the **sixteen Mahājanapadas** (ancient Indian republics).



The Satavahana Dynasty: Key Facts

- **Time Period:** 1st Century BCE to the Early 3rd Century CE
- **Location:** Initially centered around **North Maharashtra** and later expanding to **Karnataka** and **Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Significance:** The Satavahanas succeeded the **Maurya Empire** in the **Deccan** and **Central India**. Though mentioned as **Andhras** in the Puranas, the Satavahanas themselves did not use this term in their inscriptions.

Notable Rulers and Their Achievements:

Simuka (60 BCE - 37 BCE):

- Founder of the **Satavahana dynasty** and recognized as the first ruler in the **Naneghat inscription**.

Gautamiputra Satakarni (AD 106 - 130):

- Regarded as the greatest ruler of the **Satavahanas**.
- Defeated the **Shakas** and obliterated the **Kshaharata** dynasty.
- Expanded the empire from **Malwa** to **Karnataka**.
- Re-struck coins of defeated Kshaharata ruler **Nahapana**, symbolizing conquest.

Vashishthiputra Pulumayi (AD 130 - 154):

- Shifted the capital to **Paithan** (modern-day **Pratishthan**) on the Godavari River.
- Fostered alliances, including a marriage to **Rudradaman's** daughter to stop conflicts with the **Western Kshatrapas**.

Yajna Sri Satakarni (AD 165 - 194):

- Regained lost territories and promoted **maritime trade**.
- His coins depicted **ships**, highlighting the peak of his **maritime activity**.

Cultural and Technological Contributions:

- **Material Culture:** The **Satavahanas** are known for their **iron tools** such as **hoes, ploughshares**, and **arrowheads**, which contributed to agricultural advancements, particularly **paddy transplantation** in the **Krishna-Godavari delta**.
- **Trade:** Urbanization in cities like **Peddabankur** (200 BCE - 200 CE) saw the construction of **brick structures, underground drainage**, and **wells**, reflecting the increasing complexity of the region's infrastructure and trade. Roman and Satavahana coins were found in the region, signifying strong trade relations.



Social and Religious Life:

- **Social Structure:** Initially a tribal kingdom, the **Satavahanas** became **Brahmanized**, re-establishing the **varna system**. Their society exhibited a **matrilineal influence**, with kings often named after their mothers.
- **Religious Practices:** The **Satavahana rulers** were staunch **Brahmanas**, patronizing **Vedic rituals** and worshipping gods like **Krishna** and **Vasudeva**. However, they were also strong patrons of **Buddhism**, with land grants made to **Buddhist monks** in places like **Nagarjunakonda** and **Amaravati**.

Art and Architecture:

- The **Satavahanas** are noted for their **rock-cut architecture**, including significant **Chaityas** and **Viharas** like the **Karle Chaitya** and **Nasik Viharas**.
- They supported the **Amaravati School of Art**, famous for its detailed and **narrative sculptures** of the **Buddha's life**.
- **Inscriptions** from **Naneghat** and **Karle** highlight their deep religious patronage, especially towards **Buddhism**.

Language and Literature:

- The **official language** of the Satavahanas was **Prakrit**, and their inscriptions were written in the **Brahmi script**.
- The **Gathasattasai**, a **Prakrit text** attributed to King **Hala**, contains **700 verses** and is one of the most notable literary works of the time.

Decline and Legacy:

- The **Satavahana dynasty** started to decline around the **3rd century CE**. They were succeeded by the **Ikshvakus** in the **Eastern Deccan**, who continued many of the Satavahana traditions, especially in their patronage of **Buddhism**.
- Following the decline, the **Pallavas** emerged as prominent rulers in the **southern Deccan**.

Conclusion:

The discovery of these **Satavahana inscriptions** in **Telangana** provides a deeper understanding of the dynasty's **political, religious, and cultural impact**. Known for their **military prowess, support for Buddhism, and contributions to trade and urbanization**, the **Satavahanas** played a pivotal role in shaping the early history of the **Deccan** region. Their legacy lives on in the **Ikshvakus**, who carried forward the dynasty's cultural and administrative practices, particularly in Buddhist patronage.