DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

27th AUGUST, 2024

TATHASTUICS

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Champai will join BJP on Friday, says Himanta

PATNA
Champai Soren, former Chief Minister of Jharkhand, will join Bharatiya Janata Party on August 30, Jharkhand Assembly election in-charge and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday. » PAGE 5

Modi and Biden 'share concern' over Bangladesh

NEW DELHI
India and the U.S. have "shared concern" about developments in Bangladesh, said the government after U.S. President Joseph Biden and

At least 38 killed in 3 militant strikes in Balochistan province

Attacks take place in Musakhail, Qalat and Bolan districts; at least 21 militants were killed by security forces while 14 security personnel were 'martyred' during the attacks, says Pakistan military; it vows to bring the perpetrators to justice

Associated Press
QUETTA

Gunmen in south-western Pakistan killed at least 38 people in three separate attacks on Monday, officials said, while the military said security forces killed 21 insurgents, marking one of the deadliest days of violence in the restive Balochistan province, with reports of other shootings and destruction in the area as well.

Twenty-three people were fatally shot overnight after being taken from buses, vehicles and trucks in Musakhail, a district in Balochistan, senior police official Ayub Achakzai said,

Deadly strike: The mangled remains of a bus whose passengers were killed by gunmen on a highway in Musakhail district of Balochistan province, Pakistan, on Monday. AP

gunmen killed at least nine people, including four police officers and five pas- where insurgents also blew up a railway track. They also attacked a police station were reported in those attacks.

The military said 14 security personnel were martyred in the attacks, which included in the overall toll. "Sanitisation operations are being conducted and the instigators, perpetrators, facilitators and abetors of these heinous and cowardly acts, targeting innocent civilians, will be brought to justice," the military said in a statement.

Sarfraz Bugti, the Chief Minister in Balochistan, told reporters in Quetta that operations against the insurgents are under way, and "those who killed our innocent civilians and security personnel will be dealt with a full force."

Balochistan has been the scene of a long-running insurgency in Pakistan, with an array of separatist groups staging attacks

BJP warns Kangana for comments on farmers' agitation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Kangana Ranaut

The BJP on Monday distanced itself from the controversial remarks on the farmers' agitation made by its MP and actor Kangana Ranaut, declaring that she was not authorised to make such statements on behalf of the party.

At a recent event, Ms. Ranaut had alleged that the farmers' agitation against the now-scrapped three farm laws was a build-up to a "Bangladesh-type situation in India", and that "dead bodies were hanging and rapes were taking place" at the protest sites.

In a statement released by the BJP, it said the MP's comments in the context of the farmers' movement "is not the opinion of the par- 700 of their comrades during the 378-day marathon struggle, as rapists and representatives of foreign forces is another proof of the BJP's anti-farmer policy and intentions."

"These shameful anti-farmer statements are a gross insult to the farmers of the entire country which cannot be accepted under any circumstances," he added.

MAINS ORIENTED NEWS

1. On the unrest in the Balochistan region
2. Education Ministry defines 'literacy', 'full literacy' in push for adult literacy

Prelims Oriented News:

1. Report reveals minimal use of plea bargaining in India
2. Place in News : Beijing and Manila have a run-in near disputed reef Sabina Shoal

ON THE UNREST IN THE BALOCHISTAN REGION

Context:

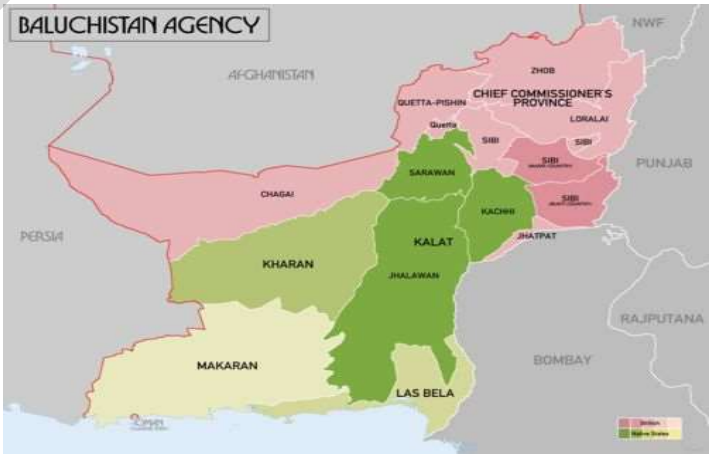
- In the past few weeks, Balochistan, in Pakistan, has witnessed large-scale protests.

Why?

- Some Protesters at Gwadar port city got together to highlight human rights violations, resource exploitation, and the government's inability to provide basic amenities to people in the province.
- And there were clashes between the protestors and the security forces, resulting in fatalities and detentions.
- Balochistan have **witnessed a proactive participation from women,** which **indicates a deep resentment of the violent tactics of security forces.** Women like **Mahrang Baloch,** who lost her father to custodial killings, are leading the protests.

Historic Reasons:

- In 1947, the Khan of Kalat announced the formation of an independent state in Balochistan but later signed the instrument of accession in 1948.
- **Centralisation of power and neglect of the basic principles of federalism:** In 1955, various provinces and ethnic areas in West Pakistan were subsumed into a single province under the One Unit scheme.
- After much opposition, it was abolished in 1970. However, this did not solve the issue of genuine federalism.
- The lack of provincial autonomy aggravated the discontent in Balochistan, which often became the site of multiple insurgencies and protests.



Economic Reasons:

- Balochistan, accounting for 44% of the country's landmass — with significant mineral resources, such as copper, gold, coal, and natural gas — continues to be one of the most backward regions in Pakistan.
- Despite being a mineral-rich region with a long coastline, Balochistan accounted for 4.5% of Pakistan's GDP, 14% of the national road network, and 4% of its national electricity consumption.

Counter-insurgency strategy:

- Enforced disappearances are common.
- Sometimes leads to extra-judicial killings and fake encounters.

China's Role in the Region:

- China is a major player in Balochistan and has invested in mining, energy, airports and expressway projects as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- The CPEC begins in Kashgar, China, traverses through the length of Pakistan and ends in Gwadar. Because of its proximity to the Strait of Hormuz, Gwadar has quite a geopolitical importance.
- A **Chinese firm has taken the Gwadar port on a 40-year lease** and is involved in constructing and operating it.
- The **possible militarisation of the port,** fencing and other infrastructure raised concerns among the locals that they would lose access to large parts of the coastline.
- There is growing anxiety that the province's demography is changing rapidly as non-locals have moved into Balochistan to work on infrastructure projects.
- Overall, the CPEC has not addressed the perception of neglect among the Baloch people.

TATHASTUICS

Balochistan Region: The Way Forward:

- Pakistan **establishment should listen to voices** calling for a wise approach to address the challenges in Balochistan.
- Moreover, Islamabad's approach of building a few big-ticket infrastructure projects **with Chinese assistance and without adequate local stakeholder participation** has inflamed the grievances.
- The unrest in Balochistan is indicative of the challenges that Pakistan is encountering in building a nation-state purely based on religion.
- Movements based on ethnic identities not defined solely by religion have often, sometimes successfully, contested Pakistan's nation-building project.
- In addition to Pakistan, the experiences from other parts of the subcontinent, such as Sri Lanka and Myanmar, demonstrate that the failure to address provincial aspirations tends to result in political turmoil.

EDUCATION MINISTRY DEFINES 'LITERACY', 'FULL LITERACY' IN PUSH FOR ADULT LITERACY

Education Ministry defines 'literacy', 'full literacy' in push for adult literacy

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

In a letter to all States, the Education Ministry has defined 'literacy', and what it means to achieve 'full literacy,' in light of a renewed push for adult literacy under the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), a five-year programme (2022-27) that aims to onboard one crore learners aged above 15 every year across all States and Union Territories.

Union School Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar, in the letter, has stated that literacy may be understood as the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, that is to identify, understand, interpret and create along with critical life skills such as digital and financial literacy. Full literacy (to be considered equivalent to 100% literacy) will be achieving 95% literacy in a State or Union Territory.

New India Literacy Programme (NILP) aims to onboard 1 crore learners per year. GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Kumar further writes that a non-literate person may be considered as literate under the NILP, as per the aforementioned definition when he/she has been declared literate after taking the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT).

According to data accessed by *The Hindu*, in 2023, 39,94,563 adult learners appeared for FLNAT in March and September, out of which 36,17,303 were certified 'literate'.

In 2024, FLNAT was conducted on March 17, in which 34,62,289 learners appeared.

However, only 29,52,385 (85.27%) were certified as literate. While the pass percentage in FLNAT hovered between 89.64% and 91.27% in 2023, in 2024 it has dropped lower to 85.27%.

In 2024-25, the Ministry has allocated a budget of ₹160 crore for NILP. According to the latest Union Budget document, only ₹76.41 crore was actually utilised towards the scheme in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, the allocation was hiked to ₹157 crore, but later brought down to ₹100 crore in the revised estimates of the Union Budget.

Significant challenge

According to the 2011 Census, India faces a significant literacy challenge with 25.76 crore non-literate individuals in the age group of 15 years and above, comprising 9.08 crore males and 16.68 crore females.

Despite the progress made under the Saakshar Bharat programme, which certified 7.64 crore individuals as literate between 2009-10 and 2017-18, an estimated 18.12 crore adults in India remain non-literate. The letter says non-literate individuals face disadvantages in various aspects of life such as financial transactions, job applications,understanding of rights and participation in higher productivity sectors.

- **New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**, a five-year programme (2022-27) **aims to onboard one crore learners aged above 15** every year across all States and Union Territories.
- It is also known as **ULLAS Scheme- (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society)**
- Under NILP a non-literate person may be considered as literate, when he/she has been declared literate after taking the **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT).**
- **Literacy** : The ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, that is to identify, understand, interpret and create along with critical life skills such as digital and financial literacy.
- **Full literacy** (to be considered equivalent to 100% literacy) will be achieving 95% literacy in a State or Union Territory.

TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services

New India Literacy Programme (NILP):

- The absolute number of non-literates of the country in 15 years and above age group is 25.76 crore (Male 9.08 crore, Female 16.68 crore)(Census 2011).
- "New India Literacy Programme **(नव भारत साक्षरता कार्यर्क्रम) for the period FYs 2022-2027** to cover all the aspects of Adult Education.
- Aligns with National Education Policy 2020.
- The scheme will be implemented **through volunteerism** through **online mode** and school will be a unit.
- All material and **resources** shall be provided **digitally.**
- Priority and Saturation in Literacy- The age cohort of 15-35 will be saturated first followed by ages 35 and above.
- The scheme **will cover non-literates of the age of 15 years and above** in all state/UTs in the country.
- The target for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for FYs 2022-27 is 5 (five) crore learners.
- **The objectives:**
  - Cover foundational literacy and numeracy
  - Critical life skills
  - Vocational skills development
  - Basic and continuing education

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REPORT REVEALS MINIMAL USE OF PLEA BARGAINING IN INDIA

- **A report from Ministry of Law and Justice has shown low adoption of plea bargaining in India**
- As per National Crime Records Bureau **(NCRB) data,** of the **1,70,52,367 cases** that went to trial in courts across the country in 2022, **only 19,135 cases** were **disposed of through plea bargaining** — a **mere 0.11%.**
- **A "plea bargain"** is a practice whereby the accused forgoes his right to plead not guilty and demand a full trial and instead uses a right to bargain for a benefit.
- Plea bargaining was **incorporated into the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) in 2005** with the **expectation that it would streamline the judicial process**.
- The procedure, **applies only to offences punishable by up to seven years of imprisonment,** with further **restrictions excluding cases** involving crimes against women, children, or socio-economic offences.

Report reveals minimal use of plea bargaining in India

Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

Nearly two decades after plea bargaining was introduced as one of the means to reduce the overwhelming pendency of cases in the courts, its application in India remains minimal, a recent report by the Ministry of Law and Justice has revealed.

The report titled 'Access to Justice through Plea Bargaining as an Alternative Model to Traditional Criminal Trial in India: A Case Study of Select Indian States' was prepared by the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU), Delhi, and released on July 8 by the Department of Law and Justice.

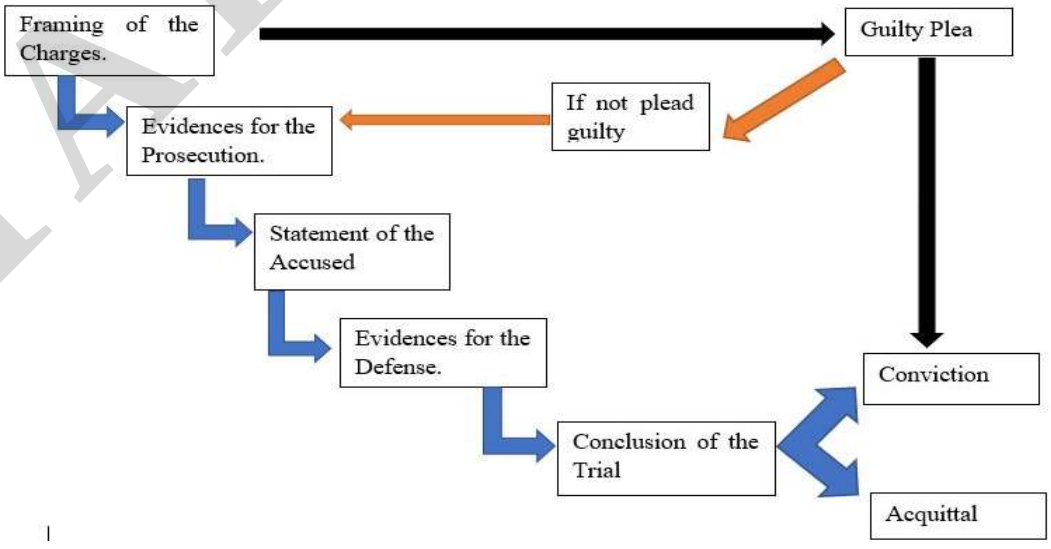
The report sheds light on the underutilisation of plea bargaining as a mechanism for the disposal of criminal cases in India. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, of the 1,70,52,367 cases that went to trial in courts across the country in 2022, only 19,135 cases were disposed of through plea bargaining – a mere 0.11%.

A "plea bargain" is a practice whereby the accused forgoes his right to plead not guilty and demand a full trial and instead uses a right to bargain for a benefit.

Plea bargaining was incorporated into the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) in 2005 with the expectation that it would streamline the judicial process by allowing accused persons to admit guilt in exchange for leniency in sentencing. The procedure, outlined in Chapter XXIA of the CrPC, applies only to offences punishable by up to seven years of imprisonment, with further restrictions excluding cases involving crimes against women, children, or socio-economic offences.

Despite these provisions, the actual use of plea bargaining has been "extremely" low, said the report submitted by Upma Gupta, Associate Professor, University School of Law and Legal Studies, GGSIPU.

The report also raised concerns over the clarity and consistency of the law's application.



TATHASTU IAS

- It started in US. It usually involves reduction of sentence or seriousness of charge.
- There are three types of plea bargaining;
  - **Charge** Bargaining : Negotiating for **dropping some charges in a case of multiple charge** or settling for a less grave charge is called charge bargaining.
  - **Sentence** Bargaining : Where the accused has an option of **admitting guilt and settling for a lesser punishment** it is sentence bargaining.
  - **Fact** Bargaining : Negotiation which involves an **admission to certain facts in return for an agreement n**ot to introduce certain other facts is fact bargaining.

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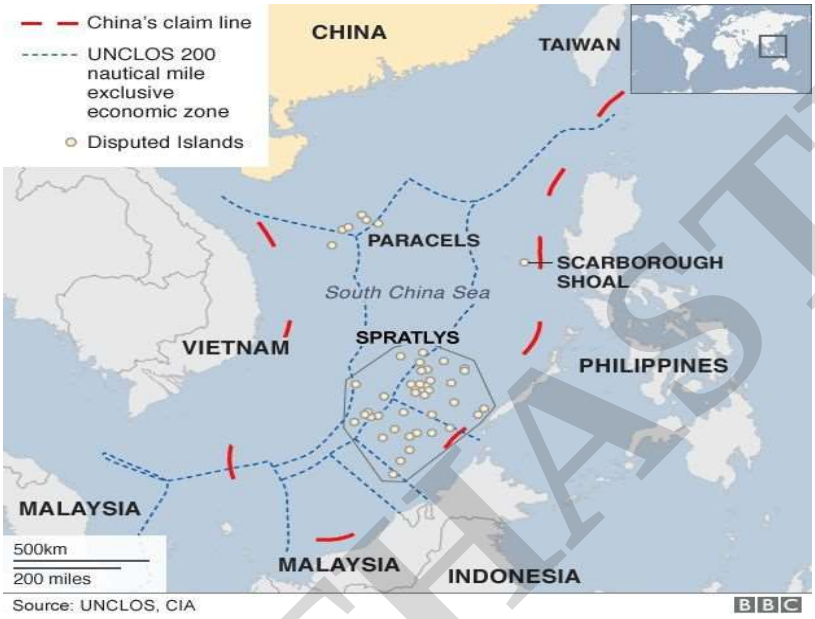
PLACE IN NEWS : BEIJING AND MANILA HAVE A RUN-IN NEAR DISPUTED REEF SABINA SHOAL

Sabina Shoal:

- China said it took "control measures" on Monday against two Philippine Coast Guard ships that had entered waters near the **disputed Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea.**
- The Philippine Coast Guard sent two vessels to deliver provisions to one of its ships at Sabina Shoal.
- As the vessels neared the shoal, they were forced to abandon the mission due to China's "excessive" deployment of ships and rough sea conditions.



Beijing and Manila have a run-in near disputed reef

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China said it took "control measures" on Monday against two Philippine Coast Guard ships that had entered waters near the disputed Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea. The Philippine Coast Guard said it sent two vessels to deliver provisions to one of its ships at Sabina Shoal.

As the vessels neared the shoal, they were forced to abandon the mission due to China's "excessive" deployment of ships and rough sea conditions, Manila said.

Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea

Sabina Shoal is an atoll in the disputed Spratly archipelago in the South China Sea, about 150 km from the western Philippine island of Palawan. The atoll is located within the exclusive economic zone of Philippines and is about 65 km east of the Second Thomas Shoal, where Philippines and China have had frequent maritime run-ins.

Map: Vijdan Mohammad Kawoosa