

Ladakh demand

- The protests were jointly organized by the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), and saw men and women marching through the main city of Leh despite freezing temperatures.
- The LAB and KDA, representing the two regions of Ladakh, have been advocating for statehood and Sixth Schedule status since its conversion into a Union Territory.
- Protestors raised slogans calling for Ladakh's statehood, the implementation of the sixth schedule of the Constitution, and the establishment of separate parliamentary seats for Leh and Kargil districts.
- Ladakh transitioned into a Union Territory without a legislature following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, leading to the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories on August 5, 2019.
- Residents of Ladakh have expressed dissatisfaction with prolonged bureaucratic rule in the Union Territory and assert that only full statehood, enabling them to elect their representatives to govern the region, can meet their demands.

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA (SCHEDULE – VI)

SIXTH SCHEDULE

[Articles 244(2) and 275(1)]

Provisions as to the Administration of Tribal Areas in 1[the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram]

1. **Autonomous districts and autonomous regions.**—(1) Subject to the provisions of this paragraph, the tribal areas in each item of 3[4[Parts I, II and IIA] and in Part III] of the table appended to paragraph 20 of this Schedule shall be an autonomous district.
2. **Constitution of District Councils and Regional Councils.**—2[(1) There shall be a District Council for each autonomous district consisting of not more than thirty members, of whom not more than four persons shall be nominated by the Governor and the rest shall be elected on the basis of adult suffrage.]
(2) There shall be a separate Regional Council for each area constituted in an autonomous region under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 1 of this Schedule.
(3) Each District Council and each Regional Council shall be a body corporate by the name respectively of “the District Council of (name of district)” and “the regional Council of (name of region)”, shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and shall by the said name sue and be sued.

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Kosovo and Schengen



Schengen Agreement



- Schengen Agreement signed on 14 June 1985, near the town of Schengen, Luxembourg.
- This treaty that led most of the European countries towards abolishment of their national borders, to build a Europe without borders known as “Schengen Area”
- Initially there were five European countries France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Netherlands and now it increased to 26.
- Liechtenstein was the 26th and the last country so far to sign the Schengen Agreement and become part of the Schengen Area.



Why was Kosovo's application kept pending for years?

- The case of Kosovo is egregious given that the European Commission had in 2018 cleared Pristina's preparedness to tackle illegal migration and corruption, preconditions for entry.
- Arguably, the single biggest obstacle to the country's Schengen visa waiver was strong opposition from several EU members, who do not recognize the 2008 unilateral declaration of independence by the breakaway state from Serbia.
- Kosovo has not been accorded legal statehood by the UN and denied recognition by Russia and China.

Is admission to Schengen mandatory for EU members?

Yes and no.

- When the Schengen agreement took effect in 1995, only seven of the entire

15-member union at the time joined the passport-free area. Today, 23 of the 27 EU states are part of the passport-free zone, excluding Cyprus, Romania, Bulgaria and Ireland.

- But then, the Schengen area comprises 27 countries, including four non-EU members: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway.

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Technical recession

What is a Technical Recession?

When the overall output of goods and services, as measured by GDP, falls from 1 quarter to the next, the economy is said to be in a technical recession.

Difference between Recession and Technical Recession

Recession	Technical Recession
1. If the recessionary phase lasts for an extended period of time, the economy is said to be in recession.	1.If the GDP declines for two successive quarters, the economy is said to be in a technical recession.
2. It lasts for a longer time period.	2.It only lasts for a short time.
3. To reach the state of recession, all aspects of the economy, including GDP, employment, and so on, are measured.	3.Only GDP is used to assess technical recession.

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SC on electoral bond

- The Supreme Court pronounced its verdict on a batch of petitions challenging the validity of the

Electoral Bond scheme, which allows for anonymous funding to political parties.

- **1. SC strikes down electoral bonds scheme:**

- The top court struck down the electoral bonds scheme calling it unconstitutional.

- **2. Not the only means to curb black money in electoral financing:**

- The Supreme Court said infringement to the Right to Information is not justified for the purpose of curbing black money.

- "There are other alternatives which substantially fulfill the purpose and impact the right to information minimally when compared to the impact of electoral bonds on the right to information," SC said.

- **3. Electoral bond scheme volatile of freedom of speech and expression:**

- Pronouncing the verdict, the CJI said the scheme is violative of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

- The bench said the fundamental right to privacy includes citizens' right to political privacy and affiliation.

- **4. Advantage for party in power:**

- The Constitution bench held that the Electoral Bonds scheme will help the party in power to gain an advantage.

- "There is also a legitimate possibility that financial contributions to a political party would lead to a quid pro quo arrangement because of the close nexus between money and politics, SC said.

- **5. SBI ordered to stop issuing Electoral bonds immediately:** SC ordered the State Bank of India (SBI) to stop issuing Electoral Bonds immediately.

- The top court asked the SBI to furnish details of the political parties that received Electoral Bonds since April 12, 2019, and all the particulars received and submit them to the Election Commission of India by March 6.

What is an electoral bond?

- An Electoral Bond is an instrument like a promissory note or bearer bond which can be purchased by any individual, company, firm or association of persons provided the person or body is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.

- The bonds are issued specifically for the purpose of contribution of funds to political parties.

- Only the political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and which secured not less than 1 percent of the votes polled in the last elections to the Lok Sabha or a state legislative assembly are eligible to receive electoral bonds.

• Why food insecurity in Nigeria?



- With over 220 million people, Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and the sixth in the world.
- It is the tenth-largest producer of crude oil in the world and achieved lower-middle-income status in 2014. However, around 84 million Nigerians, representing about 37 percent of the total population, live below the poverty line.
- Conflict and insecurity, rising inflation, and the impact of the climate crisis continue to drive hunger in Nigeria with 26.5 million

people across the country projected to face acute hunger in the June-August 2024 lean season.

- This is a staggering increase from the 18.6 million people food insecure at the end of 2023.
- Conflict in the North East region has displaced 2.2 million people and left another 4.4 million foods insecure in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states.
- Insurgent activities have added pressure to a fragile resource environment, deepened insecurity, hampered development, and heightened the food and nutrition insecurity of vulnerable women and children.

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