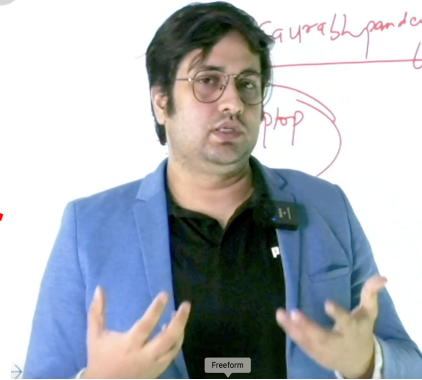


Topics - MINDS MAPS included (Daily current affairs 22nd Feb 2025



- **Jhumoir Binandini**
- **The Pir Panjal Range: & Internal security**
- **PM Visit to USA**
- **States Rally Against UGC's Draft Regulations: A Stand for Autonomy**
- **Saudi Summit (Mini-Arab summit)**
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Record attempt




Women rehearsing for a mega Jhumoir Binandini dance event in Guwahati on Friday, in an attempt to set a world record. The main event on Monday is scheduled to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PTI

Topic → Jhumoir Binandini: A Cultural Dance Treasure (culture)


Cultural Significance

 Cultural Importance: Jhumoir Binandini is a traditional dance form with deep cultural roots in its region.


Musical Accompaniment

 Folk Music: The dance is performed to specific folk music, enhancing its expressive movements.


Costume

 Traditional Attire: Performers wear vibrant costumes that reflect the cultural heritage of the dance.

Regional Origin

 Geographical Roots: Originating from a specific area, Jhumoir Binandini (ASSAM) boasts a unique style and characteristics.


Festive Occasions

 **Community Spirit:** Commonly performed during festivals, this dance showcases community spirit and celebration.

Choreography

 **Intricate Movements:** The dance features complex choreography that blends rhythm, movement, and storytelling.

Preservation Efforts

 **Cultural Heritage:** Ongoing efforts aim to preserve and promote Jhumoir Binandini as a vital part of cultural heritage.

Summary: Jhumoir Binandini is a vibrant traditional dance form celebrated for its cultural significance, unique choreography, and festive performances

India, Pakistan Army officials hold flag meeting in Pir Panjal Valley amid rising tension at LoC

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

In the wake of growing skirmishes on the Line of Control (LoC) in the Jammu region, the Indian and Pakistani Armies on Friday held a meeting in the Pir Panjal Valley's Poonch district in a bid to reduce the heightened tension sparked by recent skirmishes.

An official said a Brigade-Commander level flag meeting was held between 10.30 and 11 a.m. at the Chakkan-Da-Bagh crossing point in Poonch. The meeting, which lasted for more than an hour, apparently discussed the recent tension on LoC and measures to reduce it. However, no joint statement



On alert: The meeting came in the wake of two fresh incidents of explosion and firing on the LoC in Poonch district. FILE PHOTO

was issued after the meeting nor the measures discussed were disclosed by the Army.

Officials said the meeting was aimed at "pushing peace on the LoC and to abide by the commitment made in the 2003 and

2020 ceasefire agreements" between India and Pakistani armies.

"The flag meeting is good, as the aim is to reduce any tensions," Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said.

The meeting came in

the wake of two fresh incidents of explosion and firing on the LoC in Poonch district in the past 24 hours.

An explosion close to LoC was reported on Friday morning. However, the cause of the explosion was not disclosed immediately by the security officials.

Since 2020, India and Pakistan have been by and large maintaining a ceasefire on the LoC. This year, both Indian and Pakistani armies have accused each other of violating the agreement and resorting to "unprovoked firing".

The Indian Army on February 16 accused the Pakistani Army of resorting to "small arms firing" on an Indian post. According to the Pakistani newspaper,

Dawn, two Pakistani soldiers were injured in "an unprovoked ceasefire violation by Indian troops in the Deva and Bagsar sectors" on February 12.

Besides the cross-border firing, the Jammu region witnessed over six skirmishes on the LoC in Jammu, Rajouri, and Poonch districts in the past two months, which included sniper attackstoo.


Two soldiers, including a Captain, were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED), and at least two other soldiers were hit by snipers. It remains "inconclusive if the Pakistani Army or the militants" were involved in these attacks. Two infiltrators were also killed in this period in Poonch.


Topic → The Pir Panjal Range: A Geographical and Cultural Landmark (GS)


PAPER -3- BORDER MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL SECURITY)

Overview of the Pir Panjal Range

 **Geographical Extent:** The Pir Panjal range is part of the Western Himalayas, extending from the Nilam River in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to the Upper Beas River in Himachal Pradesh.

 **Trekking Routes:** A notable three-day trek through the Pir Panjal facilitates movement from Rajouri district to Kokernag in Anantnag, underscoring its strategic importance.

 **Historical Significance:** The mountains in Rajouri and Poonch have historically served as transit routes for militants entering Jammu from the Line of Control (LoC).

 **Bakarwal Community:** The Bakarwal herding community has a saying that highlights the connection between the Pir Panjal mountains and Kashmir, reflecting the region's cultural significance.



Seasonal Migration: During summer, nomadic shepherds traverse the Pir Panjal with their flocks, constructing temporary mud-wood houses known as **dhok** in the hilly terrains.



Insurgent Activity: Insurgent groups often stay in the Jammu region for a few days before moving to Kashmir, using the mountainous terrain for concealment and transit.



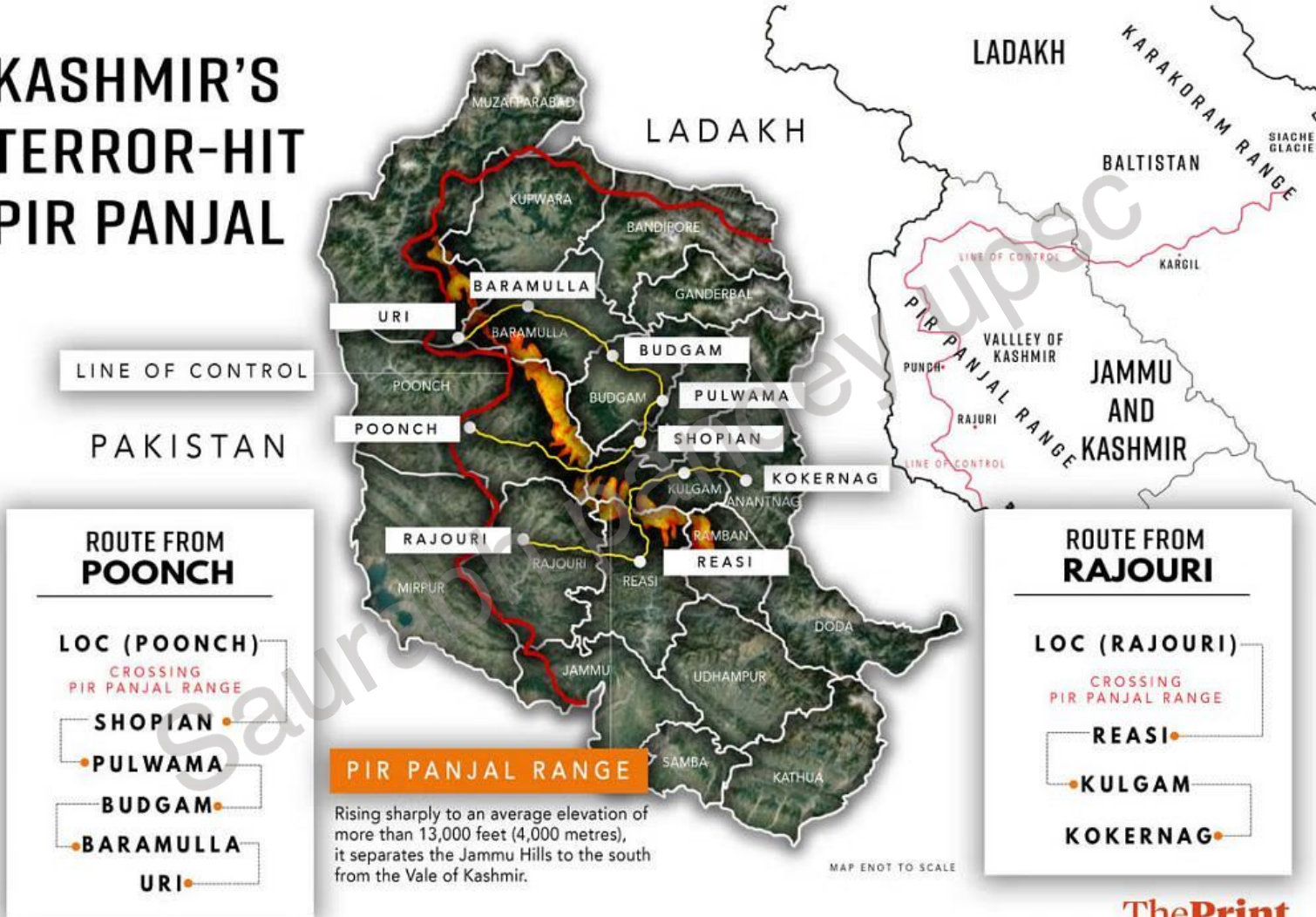
Local Architecture: The Bakarwal community builds mud-wood houses, known as **dhok**, during their seasonal stays in the Pir Panjal region.

Summary: The Pir Panjal range is a significant geographical and cultural landmark, historically facilitating insurgent movements and seasonal migrations of the Bakarwal herding community.





KASHMIR'S TERROR-HIT PIR PANJAL



The U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brief and official working visit to the United States last week was significant in many ways, reiterating the strong bonds between the two nations and igniting a new momentum in the economic relationship. The visit was replete with productive outcomes for industry of both sides, with major announcements across trade, defence, technology and energy.

From the perspective of Indian industry, the initiatives announced are likely to help India itself integrate more deeply into global supply chains, boost its technology and innovation attainments, and drive its participation in the defence industrial sector.

Towards a trade push

First, it is a pivotal decision that there was an initiation of the first phase of a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) to reduce trade barriers and streamline regulatory processes. Such an agreement would encourage United States companies to invest in India which would include the purposes of plugging India into their supply chains. The \$500 billion trade target by 2030 is ambitious but possible, potentially with sectoral sub-targets and easier cross-border procedures.

Several measures have already been taken to address tariffs on both sides. The mention of exporting industrial goods from the U.S. to India and labour-intensive products from India to the U.S. as well as agricultural products highlights that exports from both sides would be encouraged. This is supported by the intention to encourage greenfield investments, including by Indian companies in the U.S.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had endorsed this target in its report in 2020, and believes that sectors such as IT, pharma, garments and textiles, among several others, would gain from the joint commitment to Mission 500.

While the U.S. market is already relatively open to Indian exports, a well-structured BTA would be mutually beneficial, particularly if it facilitates



Chandrajit Banerjee

is Director General,
Confederation of
Indian Industry

The Prime Minister's brief visit and the announcements made will add momentum to the India-U.S. economic relationship

greater U.S. investment and technology transfers to India.

A technology, defence and energy focus

Second, the U.S.-India Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology (TRUST) underscores the deepening strategic and technological partnership between the two nations and opens further avenues for private sector cooperation with their governments and academia. With a range of sectors identified such as defence, artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology, energy, and space, TRUST will help foster closer innovation and technology partnerships with U.S. tech giants. Additionally, the INDUS Innovation initiative aims to accelerate research and development in cutting-edge sectors.

India is emerging as a key player in the AI economy and the U.S.-India Roadmap on AI Infrastructure is expected to attract investments in data centres, computing power and AI models. This initiative could enhance funding opportunities for Indian startups in AI and encourage significant investments in areas such as fintech, healthtech, agritech and other developmental solutions, not just for India but also for the Global South.

Third, defence sector initiatives reinforce the India-U.S. strategic partnership through expanded technology transfers, joint production, and industrial collaboration. The launch of a 10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership this year signifies a transformative shift in bilateral defence ties. Agreements were reached for the co-production of various systems which can promote indigenous manufacturing, skill development, and economic growth. With a potential for offset clauses, Indian industry can gain hugely from the defence agreements announced during the visit.

Fourth, energy cooperation was another critical area of discussion, with a focus on establishing long-term strategic linkages as India

seeks to diversify its energy sources. The leaders underscored the importance of increasing hydrocarbon production to enhance global energy stability and affordability. India's Union Budget 2025-26 commits to collaborating with the private sector on the development of small modular reactors (SMRs), wherein U.S. companies will play a vital role in advancing this capability. Given India's ambitious net-zero targets, the U.S., with its vast natural gas reserves, can serve as a reliable energy supplier, strengthening India's energy security.

Fifth, the two countries have pledged to further the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) through joint infrastructure projects. With both countries entering into plurilateral arrangements in these regions, infrastructure creation could be fast-tracked, with possible spin-offs for the participation of Indian industry in railways, roadways, smart cities and industrial zones. The mention of undersea cables connecting India and the U.S. would give impetus to India's digital economy and services exports as well.

Links in higher education

Sixth, on education, the leaders decided to boost higher education institutional cooperation, which includes setting up of campuses by leading U.S. educational institutions in India. This would bring comfort to Indian students. Legal mobility is expected to be streamlined as well.

Indian industry is committed to working with both governments to maintain this momentum, advocating pro-business policies and ensuring industry feedback in implementation. With collaborative spirit and sustained reform, the benefits of this visit can be fully realised, positioning India's economy on a high-growth trajectory. In sum, Mr. Modi's U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens, is more than a diplomatic success. It is a blueprint for India to leverage global partnerships in becoming an economic powerhouse, innovating and prospering in tandem with its strategic ally.

.Topic - PM Visit to USA

Introduction:

Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a brief yet impactful working visit to the United States. This visit was not just another diplomatic trip; it was a significant step in reinforcing the strong ties between India and the U.S. The outcomes of this visit have the potential to reshape the economic landscape for both nations, paving the way for a more integrated and prosperous future.

Strengthening Bonds Between India and the U.S.

Economic Relationship

The economic relationship between India and the U.S. has always been robust, but Modi's recent visit has injected new momentum into this partnership. With major announcements across various sectors, the visit highlighted the commitment of both nations to work together for mutual benefit.

Productive Outcomes for Industry:

- From trade to technology, the outcomes of this visit are expected to yield productive results for industries on both sides.
- The initiatives announced are likely to help India integrate more deeply into global supply chains, enhance its technological capabilities, and boost its participation in the defense sector

Trade Initiatives

Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)

One of the pivotal decisions made during the visit was the initiation of the first phase of a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). This agreement aims to reduce trade barriers and streamline regulatory processes, making it easier for U.S. companies to invest in India.

Trade Targets and Sectoral Focus:

The ambitious target of achieving \$500 billion in trade by 2030 is not just a number; it represents a commitment to fostering economic growth.

The focus on exporting industrial goods from the U.S. to India and labor-intensive products from India to the U.S. is a win-win for both nations.

Technology, Defence, and Energy Focus

TRUST Initiative

The U.S.-India Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology (TRUST) initiative is a game-changer. It underscores the deepening strategic and technological partnership between the two nations, opening avenues for private sector cooperation.

AI and Innovation:

- a. With India emerging as a key player in the AI economy, the U.S.-India Roadmap on AI Infrastructure is expected to attract significant investments in data centers and AI models.
- b. This initiative could enhance funding opportunities for Indian startups, driving innovation across various sectors.

Defence Sector Collaboration

The defense sector was another focal point of the discussions. The launch of a 10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership signifies a transformative shift in bilateral defense ties.

Major Defense Partnership Framework:

Agreements for co-production of various defense systems will promote indigenous manufacturing and skill development in India, creating economic growth opportunities.

Energy Cooperation

Energy cooperation was also a critical area of discussion. As India seeks to diversify its energy sources, collaboration with the U.S. can enhance energy security and stability.

Diversifying Energy Sources:

The commitment to developing small modular reactors (SMRs) and increasing hydrocarbon production will play a vital role in achieving India's ambitious net-zero targets.

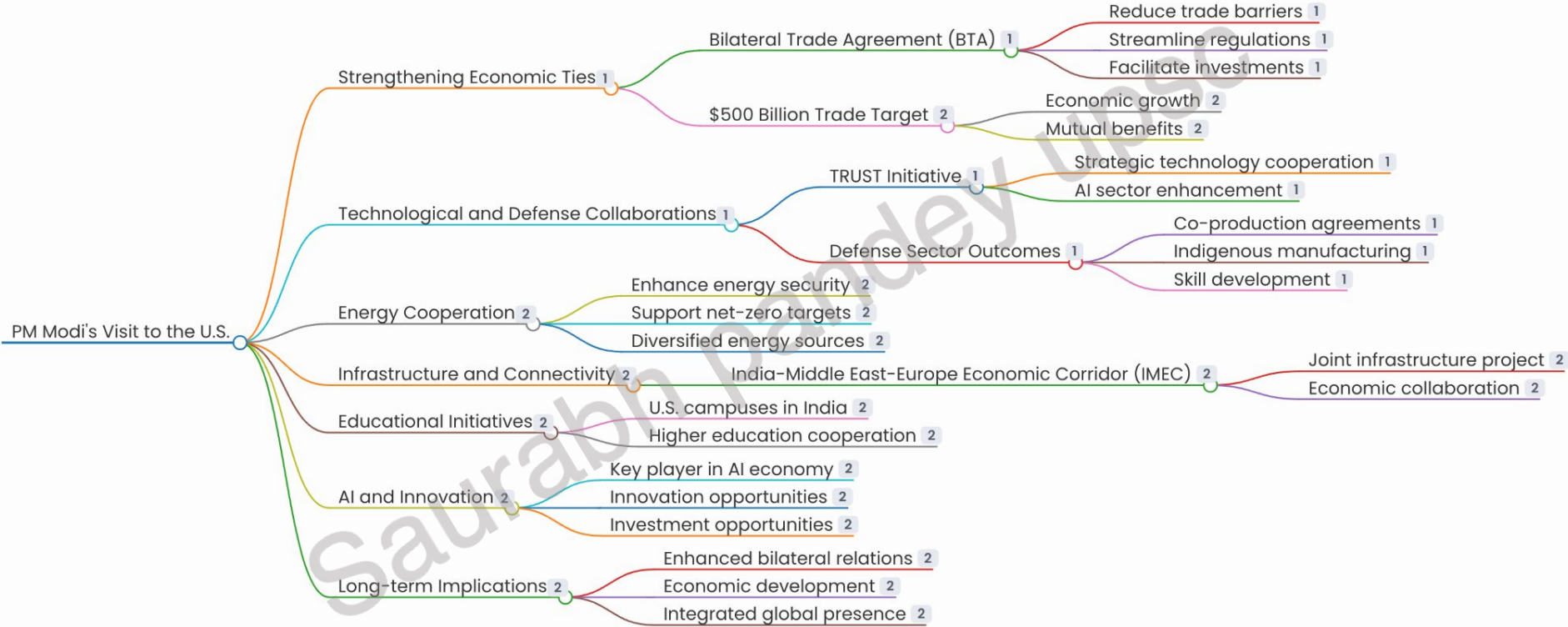
Infrastructure and Education Links

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

The two countries have pledged to further the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) through joint infrastructure projects. This collaboration could fast-track infrastructure creation, benefiting Indian industries.

Higher Education Cooperation

On the education front, the leaders decided to boost higher education cooperation, including the establishment of campuses by leading U.S. institutions in India. This will provide Indian students with more opportunities and comfort.



What was the primary focus of PM Modi's visit to the U.S.?

The visit primarily focused on strengthening economic ties, enhancing trade agreements, and discussing technological and defense collaborations.

What is the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)?

The BTA aims to reduce trade barriers, streamline regulations, and facilitate investments between India and the U.S.

How does the TRUST initiative benefit India?

The TRUST initiative underscores strategic technology cooperation, enhancing India's capability in the AI sector and attracting investments.

What are the expected outcomes for the defense sector?

The defense sector collaboration aims for co-production agreements that will enhance indigenous manufacturing and skill development in India.

How will energy cooperation impact India?

Energy cooperation will enhance India's energy security and support its ambitions for net-zero targets through diversified energy sources.

What is IMEC?

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is a joint infrastructure project aimed at enhancing connectivity and economic collaboration.

What educational initiatives were discussed?

The establishment of U.S. campuses in India to promote higher education cooperation was a key topic.

How significant is the \$500 billion trade target?

This target represents a robust commitment to bolstering economic growth and mutual benefits for both countries.

What role does AI play in this visit?

AI is pivotal for innovation and investment opportunities, as India positions itself as a key player in the AI economy.

What are the long-term implications of this visit?

The visit is expected to enhance bilateral relations, foster economic development, and create a more integrated global presence for India.

Southern disfort

Delegated legislation from the Centre should not override States' plenary laws

With less than a week for the UGC's deadline to submit feedback on its draft regulations on the appointment and promotion of university teachers and Vice-Chancellors (V-C), States ruled by parties other than the BJP have ratcheted up their opposition. At a conclave in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka challenged the regulations, saying they would undermine the federal structure, diminish the powers of State legislatures, and weaken the autonomy of State universities. This is the second such conclave, with a previous meeting in Bengaluru including the governments of Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand, and expressions of solidarity from Punjab. In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the main Opposition parties are also supportive of the stances of the ruling parties there; some regional parties that belong to the BJP-led NDA have reportedly expressed their concerns in private. A key concern is the UGC's proposal to play an enhanced role in the selection and appointment of V-Cs of State universities. Under the new regulations, the search-cum-selection committees will comprise nominees of the Chancellor (usually the Governor in State universities), the UGC Chairman, and the University syndicate or senate, neatly cutting out State Higher Education departments which were responsible for setting up these expert panels. The Chancellor will appoint the V-C from the list of three to five names shortlisted by the selection committee. UGC chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar has argued that the proposed structure "eliminates ambiguity and ensures a more transparent process", but States oppose the centralisation of power, leaving many State universities leaderless, especially in Tamil Nadu.

Apart from the allegation that the new regulations will dilute academic standards, increase commercialisation and politicisation, and reduce access to higher education for poor and disadvantaged students, the States have asked why they are being sidelined in university administration even while they continue to bear most of the financial costs for State-run higher education. Beyond higher education, there is a larger constitutional issue of Centre-State relations at stake: can delegated legislation such as the rules and regulations framed by the Union government and its agencies in the executive branch under a central law override the provisions of a plenary State law passed by a State legislature? The opposing States plan to send a high-level delegation to the Union Education Ministry and challenge the regulations in court, indicating a political and legal escalation of the issue. The UGC must not ignore this plethora of concerned voices and should remove anti-federal provisions from its draft before notifying the new regulations.



Topic → States Rally Against UGC's Draft Regulations: A Stand for Autonomy

Introduction

The clock is ticking as the University Grants Commission (UGC) faces a mounting wave of dissent from various state governments over its draft regulations concerning the appointment and promotion of university teachers and Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs).

Background of UGC Regulations

The UGC's draft regulations aim to redefine the landscape of university governance by proposing a significant centralization of power in the appointment of V-Cs.

The proposed regulations suggest that selection committees will consist of nominees from the Chancellor (usually the Governor), the UGC Chairman, and the university's syndicate or senate.

This structure, critics argue, marginalizes the State Higher Education departments, effectively sidelining them from the process of selecting leaders for State universities.

States' Concerns and Reactions

In a recent conclave held in Thiruvananthapuram, representatives from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Karnataka articulated their grave concerns regarding the implications of these regulations. They argue that the UGC's enhanced role threatens the federal structure and undermines the autonomy of State universities.

Federal Structure: The states fear that this move represents an encroachment on their rights and responsibilities, fundamentally altering the relationship between the Centre and the states.

Academic Freedom: Critics claim that the proposed regulations could dilute academic standards and lead to increased commercialization, potentially disadvantaging poorer students.

Political Unity: Interestingly, even some regional parties allied with the BJP have expressed concerns in private, indicating a broader unease across the political spectrum.

Legal and Constitutional Implications

The opposition from these states transcends educational concerns and taps into larger constitutional issues regarding Centre-State relations. Can the UGC, through delegated legislation, override the provisions set forth by State legislatures? This question looms large as the states contemplate challenging the regulations in court.

Judicial Challenges: The states have vowed to send a high-level delegation to the Union Education Ministry to contest the regulations, signaling a potential legal escalation.

Political Fallout: The political ramifications of this situation could be significant, as it may further strain the already delicate relationship between the Centre and the states.

Conclusion

As the UGC grapples with this backlash, it finds itself at a crossroads. The voices of dissent from various states serve as a clarion call for the need to reassess the proposed regulations to preserve the autonomy of State universities and uphold the federal structure. The stakes are high, not just for higher education, but for the very principles of governance in India.

Delegated legislation

Delegated legislation refers to laws made by an individual or body under powers conferred to them by an Act of Parliament (parent legislation). This mechanism enables the legislative framework to be more adaptable and responsive to specific needs without the need to pass a new Act each time.

Purpose: It allows for detailed rules and regulations to be formulated, which can be adjusted more swiftly than primary legislation.

Distinction: The key difference lies in the authority; primary legislation comes from Parliament, while delegated legislation is created by appointed bodies or individuals.

Types of Delegated Legislation

Delegated legislation manifests in several forms, each serving distinct functions within the legislative framework.

Statutory Instruments: These are the most common form, used to create detailed rules under the authority of primary legislation.

Orders in Council: Used primarily for urgent matters or when Parliament is not in session.

Regulations: Often employed in areas requiring technical knowledge or expertise, such as environmental protection

Advantages of Delegated Legislation

The use of delegated legislation presents numerous advantages, making it an essential tool for modern governance.

Flexibility: It allows for rapid adjustments to laws in response to changing circumstances.

Efficiency: Delegated legislation can be enacted more swiftly than primary legislation.

Expertise Utilization: Specialized knowledge can be leveraged for areas requiring technical understanding.

Mini-Arab summit seeks united position on Gaza crisis

Kallol Bhattacharjee
RIYADH

In a bid to convey a united position regarding the Trump administration's plans for Gaza, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman on Friday hosted the leaders of the six Gulf Cooperation Council member states and Jordan and Egypt. Riyadh has been decked up with Saudi flags on the occasion of the Saudi Founding Day that will be marked on February 22 and the summit is being presented as a sign of carrying forward Saudi commitment to peace and regional stability.

The meeting was announced by Bader Al Asaker, head of the private office of the Crown Prince. "A friendly, fraternal meeting in Riyadh brings together His Highness Crown Prince and Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, His Majesty the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and His Excellency, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt," said Mr. Al Asaker.

Prior to the summit, Saudi Arabia carried out a flurry of diplomatic outreach targeting key stakeholders in the region. Saudi



Mohammed bin Salman

Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan on Thursday briefed his counterparts of the G20 countries regarding the peace initiatives that Riyadh launched in consultation with other Arab countries after President Trump on February 5

put out his statement on solving the Gaza crisis through relocation of the Palestinian population to neighbouring states. Mr. Faisal met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Australia's Penny Wong, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, and French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot. He also met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during the same outreach. Other countries too were doing similar outreach including the Emir of Qatar, Tamim Bin Hamad, who visited India and Iran before flying into Riyadh for Friday's discussion.


Earlier, the official Saudi Press Agency had announced that the "informal brotherly gathering" was aimed at "enhancing cooperation and coordination among the GCC states (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE), Jordan and Egypt". Crown Prince Mohammed came out swiftly with a statement reiterating the "two-state" solution for resolving the Palestine crisis after President Trump called for a "take over" of the Gaza Strip. Earlier, King Abdullah of Jordan, who met President Trump on February 11, also sent an "urgent message" to the


White House about the regional implications of annexing Gaza Strip.


On February 19, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef met King Abdullah to brief the Jordanian side about the Saudi initiatives on Gaza and the Ukraine crises. Amman's official news outlet Jordan News Agency reported that during the discussion with the Saudi team, King Abdullah rejected President Trump's proposal to "own" Gaza Strip which would lead to displacement of Palestinians from Gaza Strip and possibly also from West Bank.


Topic → Saudi Summit (Mini-Arab summit)and Regional Diplomacy

Key Highlights


 **Saudi Summit:** Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman hosted leaders from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jordan, and Egypt to discuss a unified stance on Gaza.

 **Saudi Founding Day:** The summit coincided with the celebration of Saudi Founding Day on February 22, symbolizing Saudi Arabia's commitment to peace and stability.


 **Diplomatic Outreach:** Prior to the summit, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan engaged with G20 counterparts and other key international figures to discuss peace initiatives regarding Gaza.

 **Regional Reactions:** King Abdullah of Jordan rejected President Trump's proposal for the Gaza Strip, emphasizing the need to avoid Palestinian displacement.



 **Cooperation Goals:** The informal gathering aimed to enhance cooperation and coordination among GCC states, Jordan, and Egypt regarding regional issues.

 **Two-State Solution:** Crown Prince Mohammed reiterated support for a two-state solution in response to Trump's controversial proposals for Gaza.

 **Broader Context:** The meeting reflects ongoing regional tensions and the need for collaborative approaches to crises in Gaza and Ukraine.

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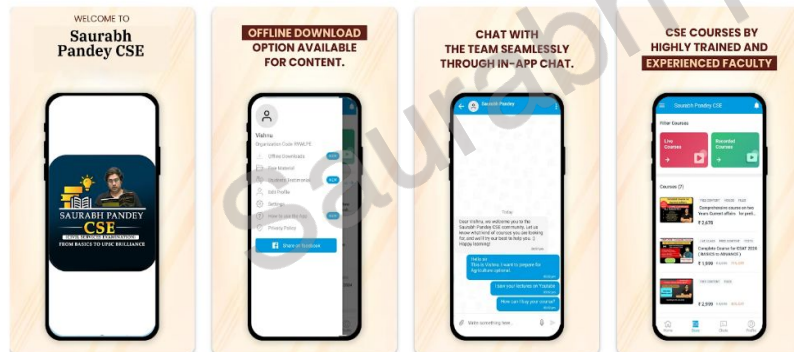
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