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MK Yadav Sir

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# MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

**(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)**

## Sitharaman Backs 'Holistic' Approach to Multilateral Development Bank Reforms

Also calls for staggered timeline for capital increase to make it more acceptable to other members

Deepshikha.Sikarwar
@timesgroup.com



Nirmala Sitharaman

**New Delhi:** India backed a "holistic" approach to multilateral development bank reforms while pitching a staggered timeline for a capital increase to make it more acceptable to the membership.

In her interaction with the G20 expert group on Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) reforms in Washington DC, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasised the need for a "transformative and not incremental" approach.

The group is headed jointly by India's 15th Finance Commission chairman NK Singh and former US treasury secretary Larry Summers.

sShe also told the group that any expansion of MDB's mandate should be in line with their ability to fund them without compromising on the development financing, people familiar with the deliberations told ET.

She also pointed out that a staggered timeline for the capital increase may enhance acceptability among members.

Sitharaman also impressed upon the group to look at how the operating model of MDBs should internalise private capital mobilisation and this should not be restricted just to their private sector arms. They should also leverage complementarities across the MDB ecosystem.

At the Bengaluru finance ministers and central bank governors meeting, the G20 had set the expert group to firm up a road map for an "updated" MDB ecosystem for the 21st century, including improving the ability of such institutions to fund a wide range of sustainable development goals and global challenges, including climate change and health-related issues.

When contacted Singh, who is currently in Washington DC, told ET that there was widespread support among the MDB group members on the finance minister's emphasis that incremental changes now needed to be replaced by transformational and structural changes.

"The daunting challenges of meeting not only the traditional twin objectives of poverty elimination and shared prosperity had now an added third dimension of global public goods," he said adding that the financing needs were far more challenging now considering that resources for global public goods will not come at the expense of the original twin objectives which have been the guiding feature within the MDB family.

He said the need to improve efficiency in utilisation of capital, rationalisation in the functions and procedures, increasing use of technology to improve outcomes, and greater harmonisation in approaches within the MDB family was emphasised by many members.

The expert group will submit its recommendations during the 3rd meeting of Finance Ministers and Governors of Central Banks to be held in Ahmedabad on the 17th-18th of July.

**Context:** India backed a "holistic" approach to **multilateral development bank reforms** while pitching a staggered timeline for a capital increase to make it more acceptable to the membership.

### Multilateral Development Banks

- **About**: MDB is a **financial institution** established by multiple member countries and falls under international law. E.g., **International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank etc.**
- **Objectives**: **Stabilizing the global financial system** during the time of crisis; Providing long-term financing; Providing lower-cost financing
  - Contribution towards **climate finance, critical for developing** and LDCs to make a smooth transition to lower carbon emissions without compromising on growth.
- **Challenges**: Currently, MDBs are **dominated by developed Countries** (WB by USA, IMF by EU and ADB by Japan); they impose conditionality in loans; there is a lack of Transparency and Accountability.

LIVE MINT

Page 2

# EUROPEAN UNION'S CARBON TAX

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

## 'India must retaliate against EU's carbon tax'

PTI
feedback@livemint.com
NEW DELHI

The government should devise a retaliatory mechanism, compatible with the World Trade Organization (WTO) norms, to deal with the challenges of the European Union's carbon tax, economic thinktank GTRI said.

The group urged the government to refrain from pursuing free trade agreements until the carbon tax issue is resolved. Global Trade Research Initiative's (GTRI's) recommendations are part of 13 proposed action points aimed at helping industry and the government counter the impact of such taxes.

"When the US imposed import duties on steel and aluminium exported from India, India retaliated by imposing import duty on the equal weightage of imports from the US. India must think about designing a similar scheme to counter the carbon border tax (CBT)," GTRI co-founder Ajay

**Context:** The government should devise a retaliatory mechanism, compatible with the World Trade Organization (WTO) norms, to deal with the challenges of the **European Union's carbon tax,** economic think tank GTRI said.

- It also suggested the government not to pursue any **free trade agreements (FTAs**) without resolving the carbon tax issue.

**Carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM)**

- **About**: It is a mechanism to be **introduced by the European Union (EU)** to put a fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.
  - The EU plans a **gradual introduction of CBAM from 1st October 2023** and this will translate into a 20-35% tax on selected imports to the EU nations by 1st January 2026.
  - From 1st January 2026, the EU will start **levying the carbon tax** on multiple products exported to the EU.
  - The products included in the CBAM list will be expanded over a period of time and by 2034, it will cover all products entering the EU.
- **Impact of CBAM on India**
  - CBAM will **hurt the global trade** of developing countries, especially India.
  - In 2022, **India's 27% of the total export** in iron, steel, and aluminium products (valuing USD 8.2 billion) went to the EU.
  - Under this mechanism, from 1st October 2023, India's export of Iron and aluminum to EU nations, will att**ract extra scrutiny.**
  - The tariffs for iron, steel, and aluminum products will be raised to 20-35 percent, exceeding the EU's agreed-upon bound tariff rate of 2.2 percent for its manufacturers at the World Trade Organization (WTO). This will **increase costs resulting in the loss of billions of dollars of exports.**
  - Though fertilizer, cement and electrical energy are the other affected products, India's export on these products to the EU is very negligible and hence won't impact India that much.
  - As the EU adds more items to the CBAM list after 1st January 2026, the **impact will be more on Indian exporters.**

BUSINESS STANDARD

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# GOLD EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

# Gold ETFs acquire patina of 4-yr low investment in FY23

ABHISHEK KUMAR
Mumbai, 16 April

Gold burnished its image as the go-to asset class during turbulent times. However, investors seemed to have missed the bus. Net inflows into gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) plunged to a four-year low of ₹653 crore in 2022-23 (FY23), even as gold emerged as the top-performing asset class.

Gold ETFs delivered returns of 14 per cent last financial year. By comparison, the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex and the National Stock Exchange Nifty delivered near-zero returns.

Investment advisors say that investor interest in any asset class is driven by past returns. Since equities delivered the highest returns in 2020-21 (FY21) and 2021-22, investors continued to flock to that asset class in FY23.

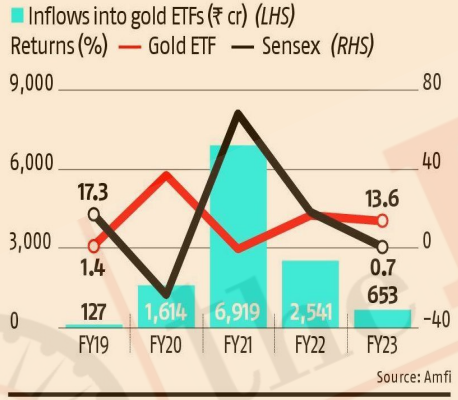
Gold ETFs had raked in close to ₹7,000 crore in FY21 as they delivered over 37 per cent returns in 2019-20. However, FY21 proved to be a lacklustre year for gold and a blockbuster one for equities, with the Sensex climbing 68 per cent.

"Money flows into the best-performing asset class. Interest in gold dried up after its poor performance FY21," says Nitesh G Buddhadev, founder, Nimit Consultancy.

Even as gold's performance has improved in recent months, experts believe that investors might be waiting on the sidelines to enter at better prices.

"Investors may be waiting for some correction in prices. Also, some flows could have shifted to debt funds, given the rise in yields," says Dev Ashish, founder, Stable Investor.

Even as returns improve, gold ETFs face a new challenge in the form of loss of indexation benefit. Changes brought in tax laws will lead to a higher tax outgo for gold ETF investors. Experts see the development as disrupting flows into the product.




In India, gold prices remained at about ₹52,000 per 10 gram in the first eight months of FY23 before picking up to ₹60,000 by the end of the year. The surge in prices — underpinned by a depreciation of the rupee and an uptick in global prices — ensured double-digit returns for gold ETF investors. The ETFs delivered 12-13 per cent returns during the period.

"Gold has continued its outperformance of 2022 in the first three months of 2023, led by softness in bond yield and a moderation in the dollar index, compared to a few months ago. The challenges in the US and European banks have led investors to move towards a flight for safety, leading to gold prices climbing up 7 per cent in rupee and 8 per cent in US dollar terms in March 2023," observes Axis Securities in a report.

The brokerage expects further upside in the months to come.

**Context:** Net inflows into **gold exchange traded funds (ETFs)** plunged to a four year low of ₹ 653 crore in 202223 (FY23), even as gold emerged as the top performing asset class.

**Gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)**

- **About:** A gold exchange-traded fund (Gold ETF) is a passive investment fund that aims to track the price of physical gold.
- **Units of GETFs:** Gold ETFs are units representing physical gold which may be in paper or dematerialised form.
  - **One gold ETF unit is equal to 1 gram of gold** and is backed by physical gold of very high purity.
  - They c**ombine the flexibility of stock investment and the simplicity of gold investments.**
- **Features and Advantages:**
  - **Transparency:** Complete transparency on the holdings of an ETF.
  - **Cost-effective:** Much lower expenses as compared to physical gold investments.
  - **Tax benefits:** No wealth tax, no security transaction tax, no VAT and no sales tax is levied on ETFs.
  - **Lower risk:** No fear of theft as ETFs are safe and secure as units held in Demat Account of the holder.
  - **Easy to trade:** The minimum bundle or lot that need to purchase to start trading in ETFs is 1 unit. i.e. 1 gram of gold.

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April 17

# AMBEDKAR CIRCUIT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Tourism)

## Passengers of the Bharat Gaurav Tourist train tour on Ambedkar Circuit visit Deeksha Bhoomi and Dragon Palace in Nagpur

**Context: Ambedkar Yatra** special tour train by **Bharat Gaurav tourist train** started from New Delhi and reached Indore and birth place of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar in Mhow on 15th April where the passengers bowed down to the architect of the Constitution Baba Saheb and paid tribute to him.

**Ambedkar circuit**

- **About**: The Ambedkar Circuit was the fourth in the list of **special tourist circuits** namely, the Ramayana Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, and North East Circuit.
- **Nodal Ministry**: IRCTC in association with the **Ministry of Tourism** is operating its first tour on the Ambedkar circuit.
- **Prominent places**: The eight-day special tour will include visits to prominent places associated with the life of Dr. Ambedkar like **New Delhi, Mhow, Nagpur, and the sacred Buddhist sites of Sanchi, Sarnath, Gaya, Rajgir, and Nalanda.**

**Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train**

- **About**: The Ministry of Railways is **promoting the cultural and religious heritage of India** through its fleet of Bharat Gaurav Tourist Trains which are being operated by Railways on various famous theme-based circuits to showcase the cultural heritage of this great nation.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It is being operated under the **'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative** which is aimed at promoting domestic tourism and is a joint collaboration between the Ministries of Tourism and Railways.
    - The **Ministry of Tourism launched the 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative** with the objective of creating awareness among the citizens about the rich heritage and culture of the country and encouraging citizens to travel within the country.
    - The scheme aims to push people, especially middle-class citizens, to **travel broadly in India rather than flying abroad.**
    - The new tourism scheme will also likely **expand employment prospects** in the tourism industry and also boost the country's economy.

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# NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

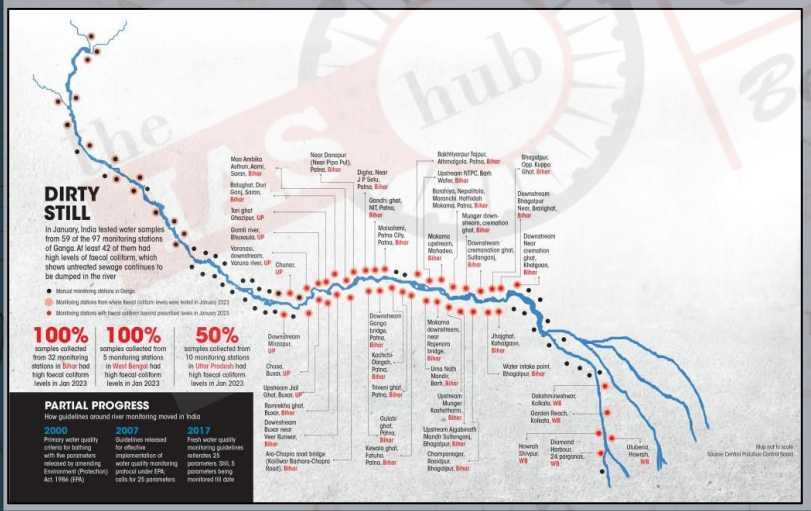


## Sewage overload: Why the Ganga remains polluted despite cleanliness drives

At least 71% of the river's monitoring stations reported alarming levels of faecal coliform in January 2023

NEXT NEWS >

By Vivek Mishra
Published: Sunday 16 April 2023




**Context:** Union minister of state for Jal Shakti (water resources) told the Parliament that the **Namami Gange Programme** has been able to reduce pollution load in the Ganga river.

- Since 2014, the Centre had taken up 409 projects with a budget outlay of Rs 32,912.40 crore to clean up the river.

**Key Points**

- At least 71 per cent of the river's monitoring stations reported **alarming levels of faecal coliform in January 2023.**
- The actual share is most likely higher, as the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** tested samples from only 59 of the 97 stations, or just 61 per cent of the river in January.
- **Faecal coliforms** are a group of bacteria found in the gut and faeces of warm-blooded animals.
    - Their presence indicates that the water has been contaminated with the faecal material of humans or other animals, which enters rivers through discharge of untreated sewage.

**Namami Gange Programme**

- **About**: It is an **Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as a 'Flagship Programme'** by the Union Government in June 2014 with a budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crore to accomplish the twin objectives of effective **abatement of pollution, conservation, and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga.**
- **Objectives**: It is dynamic and evolving in nature to address the emerging needs and priorities for the rejuvenation of river Ganga & its tributaries.
- **Main pillars of the Namami Gange Programme are:**
    - Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure
    - River-Front Development
    - River-Surface Cleaning
    - Biodiversity
    - Afforestation
    - Public Awareness
    - Industrial Effluent Monitoring
    - Ganga Gram
- **Implementing Agency**: National Mission for Clean Ganga.

DTE

APRIL 17

# CASCADE FROGS

**(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)**



**New frog species found in Meghalaya Siju cave**

A team of researchers from Zoological Survey of India found Amolops siju in Siju cave in 2020

NEXT NEWS >

By Nandita Banerji

Published: Friday 14 April 2023

**Context:** Researchers from the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** have discovered a new species of frogs from deep within the Siju cave in the South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya.

- The ZSI team named the **new cascade ranid species Amolops siju** after the cave from where this discovery was made. Siju is a four-kilometre-long natural limestone cave.

**Key Points**

- **Cascade Frogs** are named so because of their preference for **small waterfalls or cascades** in flowing hill streams.
- The **genus Amolops** is one of the largest groups of ranid frogs (family Ranidae) with currently over 70 known species that are widely distributed across northeast and north India, **Nepal, Bhutan, China, through Indochina**, to the Malay Peninsula.
- This is the **second time such a discovery** has been made in India - the **first being the discovery of the Micrixalus spelunca** in 2014 from a cave in Tamil Nadu.
- This is the **fourth new species** of a cascade frog (Amolops) published by the same team recently.
- **Amolops chanakya, Amolops terraorchis and Amolops tawang** were discovered in Arunachal Pradesh.

**Siju Cave**

- Siju Cave, also known as **Bat Cave in English,** is located in the **North East Indian state of Meghalaya** near the **Napak Lake** and Simsang River game reserve.
- It is a **limestone cave** and is famous for its stalagmites and stalactites.
- The **Siju cave-system** is more than 4 kilometres long, but nearly all of it is filled with water and inaccessible.
- The **limestone hills of Meghalaya receive a lot of rain** and moisture and holds many other cave-systems, some of them much longer and larger than Siju, but Siju Cave is among the most thoroughly researched and explored systems.

PIB

April 17

# MAHARASHTRA BHUSHAN AWARD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Awards)

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah presented "Maharashtra Bhushan" award for the year 2022 to Dr. Appasaheb Dharmadhikari in Raigarh, Maharashtra today

**Context:** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation presented the **"Maharashtra Bhushan"** award for the year 2022 to Dr. Appasaheb Dharmadhikari at Raigarh, Maharashtra.

**Maharashtra Bhushan**

- **About**: The Maharashtra Bhushan is a **highest civilian award** presented annually by the government of **Maharashtra**.
- **Origin**: It was first awarded in **1996 to Purushottam Laxman Deshpande** in the field of Literature.
- **Award fields:** It was initially conferred in every years in the fields of **Literature, Art, Sport, and Science.**
  - Later the fields of **Social Work, Journalism, and Public Administration and Health Services** were included.
  - The award is presented for outstanding achievement in their field.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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# UTTARAMERUR INSCRIPTION

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Art & Culture)

## UTTIRAMERUR INSCRIPTION

10th c. temple inscription in Tamil Nadu, detailing the functioning of village assembly, mentioned by the PM

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

ON APRIL 13, speaking at the Tamil New Year celebrations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned the Uttiramerur inscription in Tamil Nadu. It is, the Prime Minister said, one of the many historical references that establish India's credentials as the "mother of democracy".

"India is the world's oldest democracy, it is the mother of democracy. There are numerous historical references to this. An important reference is in Tamil Nadu," Modi said.

### Town and inscription

Uttiramerur, also written as Uthiramerur and Uttaramerur, is a town in Kanchipuram district, about 90 km southwest of Chennai. It was originally established c. 750 AD as a village of Brahmins, given to them as a royal (*agrahara*) grant during the reign of the Pallava Nandivarman II. Today, Uttiramerur is best known for its historic temples built during the reign of the Pallavas and the Cholas, and a number of inscriptions from the 10th century onward that are important sources for the study of politics and political administration in the Tamil country in the early medieval period.

The famous inscription referred to by the Prime Minister is from the period of



Parantaka I Chola (reign 907-955 AD), and is on the walls of the Vaikunda Perumal Temple, built by Nandivarman II and dedicated to Lord Vishnu (*above*).

### The gram sabha

The inscription contains a detailed description of the system of village self-governance, and the functioning of the local sabha or village assembly. The sabha had specialised committees with specific functions. The Uttiramerur inscription details how members were selected, the required qualifications, their roles and responsibilities, and the circumstances in which they could be removed.

The inscription says: "There will be 30 wards. Everyone living in these 30 wards would assemble and select one representative for the village assembly."

LONGER VERSION
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM/EXPLAINED

**Context:** Prime Minister on April 14 referred to the **Uttaramerur inscription** in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, while discussing India's democratic history.

- While Uttaramerur has multiple inscriptions spanning centuries, the most famous one – being referred to by PM – is from the reign of **Parantaka I (907-953 AD).**
- These provide a **detailed description about the village's self-governance** and have been cited by historians and political leaders alike as evidence of India's history of democratic functioning.

**Uttaramerur inscription**

- **About**: Uttaramerur is known for its historic temples built during the **Pallava and Chola rule.**
  - While Uttaramerur has multiple inscriptions spanning centuries, the most famous one is from the reign of **Parantaka I (907-953 AD).**
  - An 1,100 years old inscription from Tamil Nadu, built during the reign of Chola king **Parantaka I, describes processes of village self-governance.**
  - It tells **how the assembly should be run,** what should be the qualification of members, what should be the process to elect the members, and how a member would be disqualified.
- **Details of the Inscription:**
  - The inscription describes the functioning of the **local sabha,** i.e., the village assembly.
  - It mentions the **qualifications for being a representative to the sabha,** which includes ownership of a certain amount of land, having a house, being between the age of 35 and 70, and knowing mantras and Brahmanas.
  - On the other hand, **certain factors disqualify a person from consideration**, such as not having submitted accounts while previously serving in a committee, committing any of the first four of the **five 'great sins,' being associated with outcastes, and eating 'forbidden' dishes.**
  - The representative is chosen for the village assembly through **an elaborate draw of lots conducted by priests.**
  - Once elected, the **member serves on important committees** within the sabha, such as the garden committee, the tank committee, the annual committee, the committee for supervision of justice, the gold committee, and the five-fold committee.
  - The **committee assignments** last for 360 days, and any committee member implicated in any wrongdoing is removed instantly.

THE HINDU Page 12

# 11 die of heat stroke during govt. function in Navi Mumbai

**The Hindu Bureau**
PUNE

At least 11 persons reportedly died of heat stroke while attending the Maharashtra Bhushan Award ceremony at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai on Sunday, the Chief Minister's Office said.

More than 20 persons were said to be undergoing treatment at the MGM Hospital in Navi Mumbai for heat stroke, dehydration and other health-related issues.

According to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who visited the patients, 11 persons had died from heat stroke. Another 24 persons became ill and were rushed to the hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment.

"The State government will give a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased and bear expenses for treating those who have been admitted to the hospital," Mr. Shinde said.

The death toll is expected to rise, fear authorities.

**Poor provisions**

According to sources, thousands of people had gathered at the sprawling 306-acre ground at Kharghar where social activist Dattatreya Narayan alias Appasaheb Dharmadhikari was given the Maharashtra Bhushan award by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the presence of CM Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and other dignitaries.

According to sources, provision of tents was limited to the dignitaries on the dais, members of the media, and a select few VIPs.

A majority of the people, who began thronging the venue hours before the event after having travelled from different parts of Maharashtra, were exposed to the scorching heat.

More than 120 people suffered from heat-related health issues, said officials.

The event, for which people had started gathering since morning, began around 11.30 a.m. and went on till around 1 p.m. The ground was packed with followers of the Shree Sadasya (Mr. Dharmadhikari's organisation) to witness the function. The seating arrangement for the attendees was made in the open, and there was no shed to offer protection from the heat.

# HEAT WAVES

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

**Context:** At least 11 persons reportedly died of **heat stroke** while attending the Maharashtra Bhushan Award ceremony at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai on April 16, the Chief Minister's Office said.

- **Heatstroke** is a condition **caused by your body overheating**, usually as a result of prolonged exposure to or physical exertion in high temperatures.

### Heat Waves

- **About**: A heatwave is a **period of abnormally high temperatures,** a common phenomenon in India during the months of May-June and in some rare cases even extends till July.
  - **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** classifies heat waves according to regions and their temperature ranges.As per IMD, the number of heatwave days in India has increased from 413 over 1981-1990 to 600 over 2011-2020.
  - This sharp rise in the number of heatwave days has resulted due to the increasing impact of climate change.
- **Criteria for Declaring a heat wave:**
  - The Heatwave is considered when the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least **40°C for Plains and at least 30°C for Hilly regions.**
  - If the **normal maximum temperature** of a station is less than or equal to 40°C, then an increase of 5°C to 6°C from the normal temperature is considered to be heat wave condition.
  - Further, an **increase of 7°C or more** from the normal temperature is considered a severe heat wave condition.
  - If the normal maximum temperature of a station is more than 40°C, then an increase of **4°C to 5°C from the normal temperature** is considered to be heat wave condition.
  - Further, **an increase of 6°C or more** is considered a severe heat wave condition.
  - Additionally, if the **actual maximum temperature** remains 45°C or more irrespective of normal maximum temperature, a heat wave is declared.
  - In 2016, the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** issued comprehensive guidelines to prepare national level key strategies for mitigating the impact of heatwaves.

TIMES OF INDIA

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# KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA PROVINCE

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

**Context:** The marauding Pakistani Taliban is making inroads deep into the southern districts of the northwestern **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province** after running a parallel administration in the adjoining tribal regions, much like its Afghan pathfinder did before the final advance to Kabul in August 2021.

# Pakistan Taliban make deep inroads, expand Khyber footprint

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

**Islamabad:** The marauding Pakistani Taliban is making inroads deep into the southern districts of the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province after running a parallel administration in the adjoining tribal regions, much like its Afghan pathfinder did before the final advance to Kabul in August 2021.



Getty Images/iStockphoto

In most parts of the north and south Waziristan tribal districts, the TTP militants have already established their writ

In most parts of the north and south Waziristan tribal districts, the militants have already established their writ. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) representatives there dispense civil and criminal justice based on their tribal code of conduct and interpretation of Islam. They are seen regularly patrolling the rugged mountainous region, keeping Pakistani security forces at bay through ambushes, IED blasts and targeted hit-and-runs.

The surge of the Pakistani Taliban has heaped misery on tribal families twice over, having already been forced to flee home once before to escape a military offensive. The situation is just as volatile in adjacent Tank, Lakki Marwat and Bannu districts, where the TTP has been targeting police and army personnel almostdaily. More than 50 Afghan militants were killed in targeted intelligence-based operations by the military, police and counter-terrorism units over the past three months, officials said.

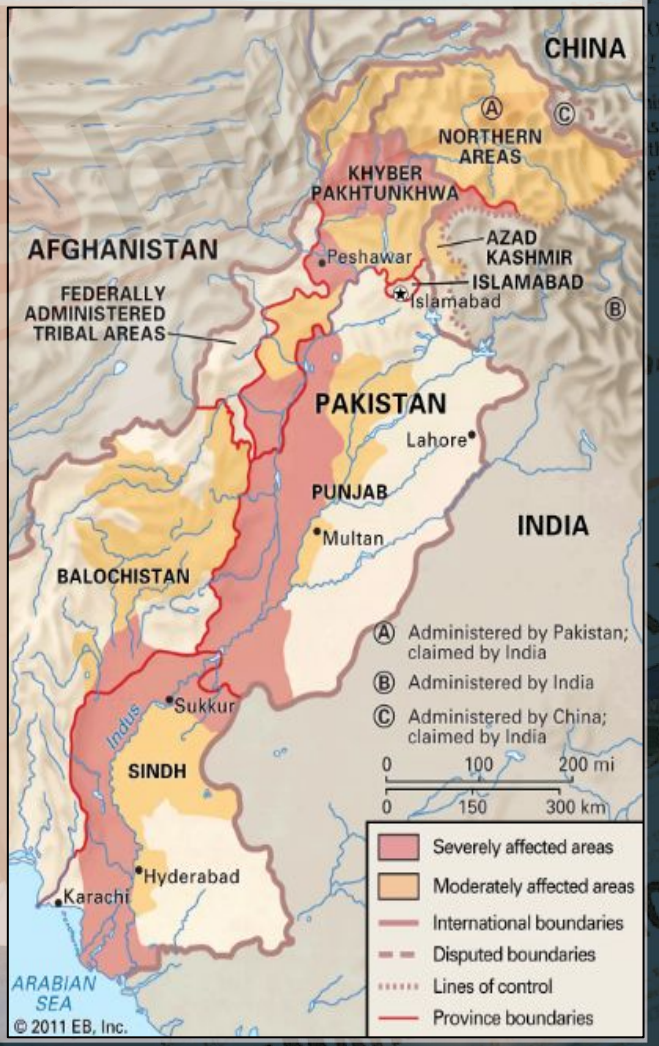
Pakistan has warned Kabul about the recent militant depredations in the country and the participation of the Afghan Taliban in these activities.Questioning the approach of his predecessor and the erstwhile Imran Khan-led PTI government in combating terror, Army chief General Asim Munir said last Friday during an in-camera session of parliament that the policy of talking to TTP had been a mistake.

After the Afghan Taliban wrested Kabul, the militant regime there facilitated Islamabad's talks with TTP, resulting in the release of hundreds of the outfit's leaders and fighters detained in Pakistan. Scores of militants exiled in Afghanistan were allowed to return to their country along with their families.

The dialogue with the TTP, Gen Munir said, yielded nothing for Pakistan but helped the outfit regroup. He said security forces were committed to restoring peace in the country, adding that operations were being conducted regularly to eliminate terrorism. "The terrorists have no other option but to accept the writ of thestate," he declared.

### Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- **About**: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, commonly abbreviated as KP or KPK, is a **province of Pakistan.**
  - While it is the **third-largest Pakistani province** in terms of both its population and its economy, it is geographically the smallest.
  - Once a **stronghold of Buddhism**, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the site of the ancient region of **Gandhara**, including the ruins of the Gandharan capital of **Pushkalavati** (located near modern-day Charsadda).
- **Location**: Located in the **northwestern region** of the country, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the smallest province of Pakistan by land area and the third-largest province by population.
- **Borders**: It is bordered by the Pakistani provinces of **Balochistan to the south, Punjab to the south-east, the territory of Gilgit-Baltistan to the north and north-east, Islamabad Capital Territory to the east and Azad Kashmir to the north-east**. It shares an international **border with Afghanistan** to the west.
- **Landscape**: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a varied landscape ranging from **rugged mountain ranges, valleys, plains surrounded by hills, undulating submontane areas and dense agricultural farms.**



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