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Supreme Court Affirms Secularism as Integral to India's Constitution

Context: Recently, the Supreme Court of India reaffirmed that secularism is a fundamental aspect of the country's Constitution, integral to its basic structure. This ruling was delivered while hearing petitions challenging the inclusion of the terms "socialist" and "secular" in the Constitution's Preamble, which were added during the 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976.

Terms under Review:

- The focus of the ruling was on the terms "socialist" and "secular," which shifted the original description of India in the Preamble from a "sovereign, democratic republic" to a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic."

Court's Observations:

- Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar reaffirmed that secularism is not merely a constitutional provision but a core feature that underpins the entire framework of the Indian Constitution. The justices connected secularism to the rights to equality and fraternity as outlined in the Constitution.
- Justice Khanna's assertion that socialism should not be viewed solely through a Western lens is pivotal. Socialism, in this framework, is not just about state control of resources but encompasses broader ideals such as social justice, equal access to opportunities, and empowerment of marginalized communities.

Petitioners' Arguments:

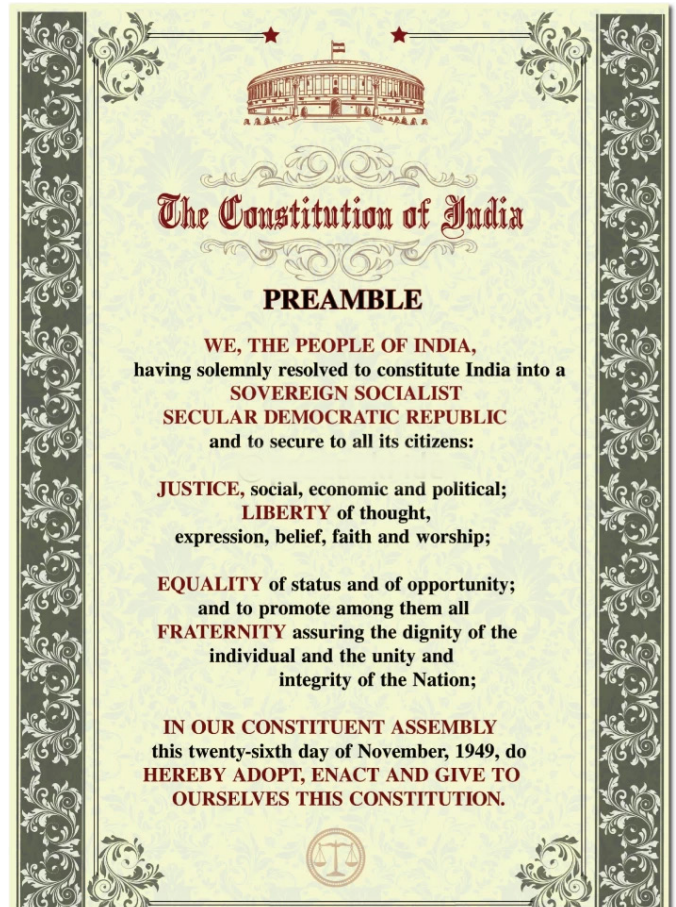
- **B.R. Ambedkar's Perspective:** Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain cited Ambedkar's concerns that socialism might infringe on personal liberties.
- **Debate in Parliament:** Petitioners contended that the terms "socialist" and "secular" were not adequately debated in Parliament prior to their inclusion.
- **Preamble's Integrity:** Jain argued that the Preamble, established on November 26, 1949, should not be amended without thorough discussion.

Constitutional Provisions related to Secularism:

- **Preamble:** India is described as a "Sovereign, Socialist,

Secular, Democratic Republic."

- **Article 14:** Equality before the law.
- **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- **Article 16:** Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.



- **Article 25:** Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.
- **Article 26:** Freedom to manage religious affairs.
- **Article 27:** Freedom from taxation for promotion of a particular religion.
- **Article 28:** Freedom from attending religious instruction or worship.
- **Article 51A (Fundamental Duties):** Promotion of harmony and spirit of common brotherhood amongst all people, regardless of religious, linguistic, or regional variations.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Socialism:

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- **Preamble:** India is described as a “Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic.”
- **Article 38:** State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people.
- **Article 39:** Certain principles of policy to be followed by the State, including equal pay for equal work and protection of workers.
- **Article 41:** Right to work, education, and public assistance.
- **Article 43:** Promotion of cottage industries and protection of interests of workers.
- **Article 43A:** Participation of workers in management of industries.

Non-Kinetic Warfare

Context: The Lok Sabha bulletin from October 16 highlights that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence will discuss 17 key subjects, including the armed forces' preparedness for hybrid warfare, which encompasses cyber, kinetic, and non-kinetic warfare, as well as anti-drone capabilities.

More Info:

- Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a committee member, emphasized the increasing threat of non-kinetic warfare, drawing parallels to the ongoing conflicts in Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine where such tactics have been evident.
- He argued that future conflicts are likely to rely heavily on these methods and urged, to ensure a thorough investigation into the Army's readiness to address these emerging threats.

About Non-Kinetic Warfare:

- Non-kinetic warfare encompasses strategies that do not rely on direct physical force but instead aim to disrupt, manipulate, or degrade an opponent's capabilities and resolve. Key components include:
 - » **Cyber Warfare:** Involves hacking, data breaches, and attacks on critical infrastructure, targeting information systems to cause disruption or gather intelligence.
 - » **Psychological Operations (PsyOps):** Aims

to influence perceptions and behavior through propaganda, disinformation, and psychological manipulation, often to undermine morale or create confusion.

- » **Economic Warfare:** Involves measures like sanctions and trade restrictions to weaken an adversary's economy and resources without engaging in military conflict.
- » **Information Warfare:** Utilizes social media and other platforms to spread misinformation, sow discord, and manipulate public opinion, often blurring the lines between truth and falsehood.
- » **Electronic Warfare:** Focuses on disrupting or controlling the electromagnetic spectrum, targeting communications and radar systems to hinder an opponent's operational effectiveness.

Other Dimensions:

- **Non-Military Stakeholders:** Involves corporations, civilian organizations, and other entities, expanding the battlefield beyond state actors.
- **Technological Advancements:** The rise of technology enhances the potential impact of non-kinetic methods, making them increasingly effective.
- **Potential Lethality:** Non-kinetic warfare could prove deadlier than traditional approaches, with conflicts potentially resolved without physical confrontation.
- **Real-World Examples:** Large-scale cyberattacks on critical infrastructure (e.g., power grids, hospitals) have demonstrated the severe consequences of non-kinetic warfare, as seen in various global incidents.

Future Warfare Initiatives

Future Warfare Course:

- » **Initiative:** Launched under the direction of Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.
- » **Tri-Services Course:** A pioneering course conducted by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff for officers across all branches of the armed forces.
- » **Target Audience:** Rank-agnostic, aimed at Major Generals, Majors, and their equivalents from different services.

Course Objectives:

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- » **Understanding Modern Warfare:** Equipping officers with knowledge of the operational and technological aspects of future conflicts.
- **Key Focus Areas:**
 - » Contact and non-contact warfare.
 - » Kinetic and non-kinetic strategies.
 - » Psychological and informational tactics.

Conclusion:

Non-kinetic methods are increasingly prominent in contemporary conflicts, allowing for strategic engagement that can be less detectable and deniable compared to traditional military actions. These approaches often aim to achieve objectives without escalating to open warfare.

Global Coral Bleaching Event Expands

Context: Recently, NOAA said that global coral bleaching event that began in February 2023 has now escalated to the most extensive on record, impacting 77% of the world's coral reef areas. This marks the fourth significant global bleaching event since 1998 and has surpassed the previous record (2014-2017) by over 11% in a significantly shorter time frame.

Affected Regions:

- Coral reefs across the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans have suffered, with bleaching reported in 74 countries and territories. Recently confirmed bleaching areas include Palau, Guam, and Israel, while high heat stress persists in regions such as the Caribbean and South China Sea.

The Science behind Coral Bleaching:

- Coral bleaching occurs when corals expel the vibrant algae (zooxanthellae) residing within their tissues due to heat stress. This process leads to pale corals that become increasingly vulnerable to starvation and disease. Alarmingly, at least 14% of the world's remaining corals died during the last two global bleaching events.

Climate Change and Its Impact:

- Scientists warn that coral reefs are at significant risk of loss, having already crossed a tipping point at just 1.3

degrees Celsius of global warming, contrary to earlier projections that set the critical threshold at 1.5 degrees. The current bleaching event has been exacerbated by the El Niño climate pattern. However, forecasts suggest a potential transition to La Niña, which typically brings cooler ocean temperatures, offering a glimmer of hope for coral recovery.



Economic Importance:

- Coral reefs play a vital role in the global economy, contributing approximately \$2.7 trillion annually in goods and services. Their health is crucial for ocean ecosystems, subsistence fisheries, and tourism, making their preservation a priority for environmental sustainability.

Global Response:

- In response to this escalating crisis, a special emergency session on coral reefs will take place at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity summit (COP16) in Colombia. This session aims to discuss strategies for coral conservation and secure necessary funding, marking a crucial step in addressing the global coral bleaching event and protecting these essential marine ecosystems.

Coral Bleaching Background:

- Mass bleaching events have occurred in 1998, 2010, 2016, and now 2023.
- Coral reefs support 25% of marine species, provide coastal protection, and generate significant economic benefits.

Conclusion:

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The alarming expansion of the global coral bleaching event underscores the urgent need for comprehensive conservation efforts. With significant portions of coral reefs at risk, collaborative action at forums like COP16 is essential to

safeguard these critical ecosystems, ensuring their resilience and the continued benefits they provide to our planet.

Power Packed News

5th National Water Awards 2023: Odisha Wins Best State Award

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred the 5th National Water Awards in New Delhi, recognizing significant contributions to water conservation across nine categories. A total of 38 winners were honored, including awards for Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Urban Local Body, and Best Civil Society.
- Odisha secured the first prize in the Best State category, followed by Uttar Pradesh, while Gujarat and Puducherry shared the third spot. The awards come with a citation, trophy, and cash prizes in certain categories.
- President Murmu emphasized the importance of water conservation and highlighted the Jal Jeevan Mission's success in providing tap water connections to over 78% of rural households, up from 17% in 2019. She also raised concerns about India's depleting groundwater resources.
- In other categories, Government Upper Primary School in Sikar, Rajasthan, won first prize for Best School, recognized for its efforts in water harvesting.
- These awards support the government's vision of a Jal Samridh Bharat (Water Prosperous India) through innovative water management efforts.

**Odisha Won The First Prize
In 5th National Water
Awards 2023**



Sport Exclusions in 2026 Commonwealth Games

- Several key sports, including cricket, field hockey, badminton, wrestling, and table tennis, have been excluded from the 2026 Commonwealth Games (CWG) in Glasgow, scheduled from July 23 to August 2. These exclusions represent a significant change in the structure of the event, reducing the number of sports compared to previous editions.
- The 2026 CWG will feature a reduced roster of only 10 sports, including athletics, swimming, 3x3 basketball, track cycling, weightlifting, lawn bowls, artistic gymnastics, netball, boxing, and judo. This marks a substantial reduction from the 20 sports included in the 2022 Birmingham edition.
- The omission of wrestling and shooting, two disciplines where India has consistently excelled, is particularly detrimental. India has won 114 medals in wrestling and 135 in shooting across previous CWG events.
- The removal of field hockey, badminton, and table tennis also diminishes India's medal prospects, as these sports have historically produced significant successes for the nation. This development is expected to challenge India's overall standing in the 2026 CWG. Wrestling and shooting, for example, have been particularly successful for India, contributing 114 and 135 medals, respectively, in previous games.



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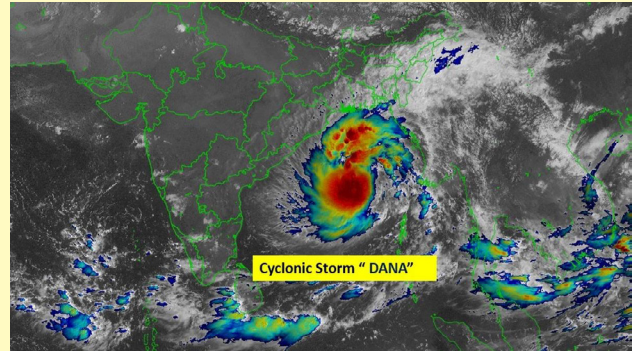
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Cyclone Dana

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted the formation of Cyclone “Dana,” which is expected to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by October 23, 2024, with wind speeds reaching up to 120 km/h.
- The cyclone is predicted to affect Odisha and West Bengal, bringing heavy rainfall and high-speed winds, posing a significant threat to infrastructure and communities in these regions.

About Cyclones:

- Cyclones are large-scale air masses that rotate around a low-pressure center, forming over warm ocean waters with temperatures above 26.5°C. As warm air rises and condenses into clouds, it releases energy that fuels the cyclone.
- Cyclonic storms are categorized based on wind speeds, with severe cyclones reaching between 89 to 117 km/h. Cyclones typically cause torrential rains, strong winds, storm surges, and significant flooding.
- In the Indian Ocean region, cyclones are named according to guidelines set by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to simplify communication.
- Member countries like India, Bangladesh, and others provide names sequentially.



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