

## Local self-government

- In December 1992, Parliament passed the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, which instituted panchayats and municipalities, respectively.
- These amendments mandated that State governments constitute panchayats (at the village, block, and district levels) and municipalities (in the form of municipal corporations, municipal councils, and nagar panchayats) in every region.
- They sought to institute a third-tier of governance in the federal framework through the devolution of functions, funds, and functionaries to local governments.

### Importance of Local government

- First, it provides for the efficient provision of public goods since governments with smaller jurisdictions can provide services as per the preferences of their residents.
- Second, it promotes deeper democracy since governments that are closer to the people allow citizens to engage with public affairs more easily.
- The 73rd and 74th amendments require States to vest panchayats and municipalities with the authority

“to enable them to function as institutions of self-government”, including the powers to prepare and implement plans and schemes for economic development and social justice.

- They also mandate the regular conduct of local elections, provide for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women in local councils, and institute participative forums like gram sabhas in panchayats and ward committees in municipal corporations.
- Hence, the core values that the amendments sought to entrench are that of deepening local democracy and devolving functions for meeting the ends of economic development and social justice.
- Limitations include the discretion given to the States regarding the devolution of powers and levying of local taxes.
- State governments are reluctant to implement the 74th amendment as cities are economic powerhouses and controlling urban land is important for financing State governments and political parties.
- The courts have also mostly interpreted the 74th amendment narrowly, allowing State

governments to retain their control over cities.

- In this context, the Patna High Court's recent order declaring some provisions of the Bihar Municipal (Amendment) Act, 2021 as unconstitutional is path-breaking.
- The 2021 amendment transferred the powers of appointment of Grade C and D employees of municipalities from the Empowered Standing Committee of the municipality to the State government-controlled Directorate of Municipal Administration.
- The court held that these provisions violate the 74th Amendment since the recentralization of power and the weakening of self-governance "are incompatible with the idea, intent, and design of the constitutional amendment".

**THE HINDU**

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### **Jallikattu**

- The verdict of a five-member Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on a batch of petitions seeking to strike down a 2017 Tamil Nadu law that protects Jallikattu, a traditional event involving bulls, is expected next week.

- Jallikattu is a religious and cultural event celebrated by the people of Tamil Nadu.
- Describing Jallikattu as "a tool for conserving this precious indigenous breed of livestock," the government argued that the traditional event did not violate principles of compassion and humanity.
- It added that any ban on such a practice would be viewed as "hostile to culture and against the sensitivities of the community."
- The petitioners' line of argument was that animal life was inextricably connected to the lives of humans.
- According to them, "extreme cruelty" was inflicted on the animals.

**THE HINDU**

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### **Ladakh in the sixth schedule**

- On January 2, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) constituted a high-powered committee chaired by the Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai for the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- The committee will discuss measures to protect the region's unique culture and language taking into consideration its geographical location and strategic importance; ensure the protection of land and employment for the people of Ladakh; strategize inclusive

development and discuss issues related to the empowerment of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill District Councils of Leh and Karg.

#### **Why was the committee formed?**

- Civil society groups in Ladakh have been demanding protection of land, resources, and employment for the past three years after the special status of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution was read down by Parliament on August 5, 2019.
- The fear of big businesses and taking conglomerates away land and jobs from the local people have contributed to this demand.

#### **What is the sixth schedule?**

- The sixth schedule under Article 244 of the Constitution protects the autonomy of tribal populations through the creation of autonomous development councils which can frame laws on land, public health, and agriculture.
- As of now, ten autonomous councils exist in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.

#### **THE HINDU**

### **Tapovan Vishnugad Hydropower**

- Tapovan Vishnugad Hydropower Plant is a 520 MW run-of-river hydroelectric project being constructed on the Dhauliganga River in the Chamoli District of Uttarakhand, India. The plant is expected to generate over 2.5 TWh of electricity annually
- The power plant is located downstream on the Alaknanda River and will contain four 130 MW Pelton turbine generators. The barrage is being constructed across the Dhauliganga River and has a catchment area of 3,100 km<sup>2</sup>

#### **Run-of-the-river hydroelectric**

- Run-of-the-river hydroelectric stations are those with small or no reservoir capacity so that only the water coming from upstream is available for generation at that moment, and any oversupply must pass unused.
- A constant supply of water from a lake or existing reservoir upstream

is a significant advantage in choosing sites for run-of-the-river.



- The Pelton wheel or Pelton Turbine is an impulse-type water turbine invented by American inventor Lester Allan Pelton in the 1870s.
- The Pelton wheel extracts energy from the impulse of moving water, as opposed to water's dead weight like the traditional overshot water wheel.

**THE HINDU**

## Green Hydrogen mission

### GH<sub>2</sub>: promises & challenges

- Hydrogen produced is said to be 'green' if all its inputs are green. Decarbonisation plans of many countries include green hydrogen (GH<sub>2</sub>) because combusting hydrogen releases only heat and steam

- 60% of India's energy comes from fossil fuel sources

- The production mode of choice of green hydrogen is through the electrolysis of water

- India currently lacks the required electrolysers and needs cheaper renewable energy



- Technologies to adapt hydrogen fuel cells for use in vehicles are largely immature in India

- Hydrogen leaks easily and liquid hydrogen reacts explosively with air, incurring significant storage and transport costs

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission with an initial outlay of ₹19,744 crore, in a move aimed at making the country a global hub to produce, utilize and export green hydrogen and its derivatives.
- The government expects that the initiative will help abate nearly 50 million tonnes (MT) of annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and cumulatively reduce fossil fuel imports estimated at over ₹1 lakh crore.

**CABINET DECISIONS**  
04 JANUARY 2023

**NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION**

Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission with initial outlay of **Rs. 19,744 crore.**

*Outlay includes:*

- Rs.17,490 crore for SIGHT programme
- Rs.1,466 crore for pilot projects
- Rs.400 crore for R&D
- Rs.388 crore towards other mission components

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**NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION**

Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission with initial outlay of **Rs. 19,744 crore.**

*Expected Mission Outcome:*

- Development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum
- Renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in country
- Over Rs. Eight lakh crore in total investments
- Creation of over Six lakh jobs
- Over Rs. One lakh crore cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports
- Abatement of nearly 50 MMT of annual greenhouse gas emissions

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atmosphere and is the cleanest and most sustainable hydrogen.

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**NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION**

Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission with initial outlay of **Rs. 19,744 crore.**

*Benefits*

- Creation of export opportunities for Green Hydrogen and its derivatives
- Decarbonization of industrial, mobility and energy sectors
- Reduction in dependence on imported fossil fuels and feedstock
- Development of indigenous manufacturing capabilities
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Development of cutting-edge technologies

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THE HINDU

### About Green Hydrogen

- Renewable hydrogen, green hydrogen is obtained by electrolysis of water.
- The most crucial thing is that this process is powered entirely by renewable energy, so it generates no polluting emissions into the