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MHA proposes new Chapter 'K' under Article 371 for Ladakh

Provision being made to bring elected body for Union Territory; civil society members who attended MHA meet say they were 'disappointed' as they are yet to receive draft proposal; they also sought compensation for families of violence victims

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed an elected body for the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh by introducing a new constitutional provision under Article 371 of the Constitution in a proposed Chapter K, civil society members who attended a meeting with MHA officials in Delhi on Wednesday said.

Cherring Dorjay Lakruk of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) told *The Hindu* that they were "disappointed" as this was a reiteration of the May 22 meeting, and were given a PowerPoint presentation mentioning Chapter K on Wednesday but were yet to get a detailed "draft proposal" from the MHA.

A statement released by the civil society members said, "The MHA stated that the intended UT-level body, would be elected by di-



Making a point: People from Ladakh have staged several protests over the years seeking Statehood. ANI

rect election, and would have legislative powers with respect to land, culture and language, forest, environment, natural resources, and any other subject matter reserved for the UT under Article 240."

Ladakh chief secretary Ashish Kundra, who attended the meeting, said in a post on X, "Attended the sub-committee meeting with leaders of Ladakh at MHA in Delhi today. A general air of positivity prevailed as the broad con-

tours of a Sui-generis model of governance under Article 371 of the Constitution were discussed. Deepening democracy is the goal."

Representatives of the LAB and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) asked the MHA to ensure that the Lieutenant-Governor of Ladakh does not take any major decisions concerning the administration, bureaucracy or land until the proposed constitutional safeguards are put in place,

while pressing for the legislation to be passed in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament.

The members also sought compensation for the families of the victims of the violence that broke out on September 24, 2025, in Leh city, where four people were killed in police firing. They further sought the withdrawal of criminal cases against 80 people, along the lines of the protection afforded to those who took part in the "Gen Z protest" at Delhi's Jantar Mantar in July. The violence in Ladakh erupted amid a protest that was called to demand constitutional safeguards.

Article 371, which currently has chapters that run from A to J, deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions" and exists under Part XXI of the Constitution. It is currently applicable in 12 States: Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra

Pradesh, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim, and Karnataka.

After Ladakh lost its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution as part of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, it was turned into a Union Territory without a legislative assembly in 2019. Since then, the LAB and the KDA have been demanding Statehood and tribal status for Ladakh and seeking a larger role for local residents in decisions relating to land and infrastructure projects.

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was also part of the delegation that met MHA officials, said, "We cannot say that the meeting was a complete success. We hoped to get a draft proposal assuring us protection under Article 371. However, that was not provided. We have asked the government to take back the cases registered against protesters after last year's incident in Leh city."

The provisions in Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule in the Constitution of India are made in order to

- (a) protect the interests of Scheduled Tribes
- (b) determine the boundaries between States
- (c) determine the powers, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats
- (d) protect the interests of all the border States

1. MHA proposes new Chapter 'K' under Article 371 for Ladakh

Source: The Hindu

GS Subject: GS-2 — Polity & Governance, Federalism, Constitutional Provisions & Union Territories

1. Context

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has proposed a new **Chapter K under Article 371** to provide Ladakh with an elected body and constitutional safeguards over **land, culture, language, forests, environment and natural resources**.

2. Proposed Framework

- A **directly elected body** would exercise powers over specified local matters.
- The arrangement is envisaged as a “**sui-generis**” **governance model** suited to Ladakh’s tribal, cultural and geographical characteristics.
- It seeks greater **local participation** while retaining Ladakh’s status as a Union Territory.

3. Article 371 Series

- **371**: Maharashtra & Gujarat — regional development.
- **371A**: Nagaland — customary law, social/religious practices and land/resources.
- **371B**: Assam — committee for specified tribal areas.
- **371C**: Manipur — Hill Areas committee and Governor’s role.
- **371D**: Andhra Pradesh & Telangana — education and public employment.
- **371E**: Andhra Pradesh — Central University.
- **371F**: Sikkim — special constitutional arrangements and representation.
- **371G**: Mizoram — customary law and land.
- **371H**: Arunachal Pradesh — Governor’s special responsibility for law and order.
- **371I**: Goa — minimum 30-member Assembly.
- **371J**: Karnataka — special provisions for Kalyana Karnataka.
- **Note: Article 371K does not currently exist**; the proposed Chapter K would create a new arrangement for Ladakh.
- Together, these provisions represent **asymmetric federalism** — differentiated constitutional arrangements for regions with distinctive needs.

4. Why Ladakh Seeks Safeguards

- Ladakh became a **Union Territory without a legislature in 2019** after the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The **Leh Apex Body (LAB)** and **Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)** have demanded:
 - Statehood
 - **Sixth Schedule protection**
 - Safeguards for land and tribal interests
 - Greater political representation and local participation.
- Concerns include **land ownership, cultural identity, demographic change and ecological fragility**.

5. Present Governance

- Ladakh currently has **no Legislative Assembly**.
- Under **Article 240**, the President can make regulations for Ladakh on specified matters.
- The proposed elected body would therefore introduce greater **representative local governance**.

- A crucial issue will be defining powers between the **elected body, Lieutenant-Governor and Union Government**.

6. Significance

- **Democratic decentralisation:** Greater local participation in governance.
- **Asymmetric federalism:** Allows constitutional design tailored to regional circumstances.
- **Tribal & cultural protection:** Safeguards customary practices, identity and community interests.
- **Land & resources:** Strengthens local involvement in land and resource decisions.
- **Environmental governance:** Helps reconcile development with the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.
- **National integration:** Accommodation of regional aspirations can strengthen democratic legitimacy.

7. Challenges

- **Power-sharing:** Possible friction between elected institutions, Lieutenant-Governor and Union Government.
- **Leh–Kargil balance:** Need equitable representation of both regions.
- **Development vs ecology:** Tourism and infrastructure must remain within ecological carrying capacity.
- **Autonomy vs security:** Local governance must coexist with Ladakh's sensitive international borders.
- **Competing demands:** The proposal may not satisfy demands for full **statehood or Sixth Schedule status**.
- **Implementation:** Effective autonomy requires clear powers, finances, institutions and accountability.



India's Lohum ships first lithium ore from Zimbabwe

India's Lohum said on Wednesday it had dispatched its first shipment of lithium ore from Zimbabwe, marking the start of its mining operations in the southern African country and making it the first domestic company to produce lithium from overseas assets. The Indian producer of sustainable critical minerals has secured rights to 10 lithium mining blocks in Zimbabwe's Matabelel and South Province covering about 1,100 hectares, with estimated deposits of 20 million-40 million tonnes of ore.

Consider the following pairs :

Country	Resource-rich in
I. Botswana	: Diamond
II. Chile	: Lithium
III. Indonesia	: Nickel

In how many of the above rows is the given information correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All the three
- (d) None

2. India's Lohum ships first lithium ore from Zimbabwe

██████: Reuters

GS Subject: GS-3 — Critical Minerals, Mining & Energy Security | GS-2 — India-Africa Relations

1. Context

- **Lohum**, an Indian producer of sustainable critical minerals, has shipped its **first consignment of lithium ore from Zimbabwe**, marking the beginning of its overseas mining operations and making it the **first Indian domestic company to produce lithium from overseas assets**.

2. Zimbabwe Lithium Assets

- Lohum has secured rights to **10 lithium mining blocks** in Zimbabwe's **Matabeleland and South Provinces**.
- **Area:** Around **1,100 hectares**.
- **Estimated ore deposits:** **30–40 million tonnes**.
- The assets are expected to support production of around **3 lakh metric tonnes of lithium carbonate equivalent (LCE)**.
- Estimated value of the resources: around **\$7 billion** at prevailing prices.

3. Why Lithium Matters

- Lithium is a key **critical mineral** essential for:
 - **Lithium-ion batteries**
 - Electric vehicles (EVs)
 - Renewable-energy storage
 - Mobile phones, laptops and other electronics.
- Securing overseas resources can reduce India's vulnerability to **import disruptions and concentration of global mineral supply chains**.

4. Significance for India

- **Energy security:** Supports India's transition towards EVs and renewable-energy storage.
- **Critical-mineral security:** Diversifies India's access to strategically important minerals.
- **Supply-chain resilience:** Reduces dependence on a limited number of mineral-producing countries.
- **Overseas resource acquisition:** Marks a shift from merely importing minerals to **acquiring and developing mineral assets abroad**.
- **India-Africa cooperation:** Strengthens India's economic and resource partnerships with African countries.
- **Industrial development:** Can support India's growing **battery manufacturing, EV and clean-energy ecosystem**.

5. Challenges

- **Geopolitical risk:** Overseas mining assets remain exposed to political and regulatory changes in host countries.
- **Price volatility:** Lithium prices can fluctuate sharply depending on EV demand and global supply.
- **Processing capacity:** Mining ore abroad does not by itself ensure domestic supply; India also needs adequate **refining and processing capabilities**.
- **Environmental concerns:** Lithium mining can create pressure on water resources, land and local ecosystems.
- **Supply-chain logistics:** Transporting ore and establishing reliable processing and refining chains adds cost and complexity.

PM-KUSUM 2.0 likely to be announced soon: Pralhad

Saptaparno Ghosh

NEW DELHI

The second phase of the Centre's flagship PM-KUSUM scheme is likely to be announced shortly, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi said on the sidelines of the curtain raiser for the seventh Agrivoltaics World Conference 2026.

“The process is on for PM-KUSUM 2.0, that is, Phase-II, and I am quite confident very shortly the honourable Prime Minister

. Consider the following statements about 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana' :

- I. It targets installation of one crore solar rooftop panels in the residential sector.
- II. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy aims to impart training on installation, operation, maintenance and repairs of solar rooftop systems at grassroot levels.
- III. It aims to create more than three lakhs skilled manpower through fresh skilling, and upskilling, under scheme component of capacity building.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) I and III only
- (c) II and III only
- (d) I, II and III

3. **PM-KUSUM 2.0 likely to be announced soon**

Source: The Hindu

GS Subject: GS-3 — Agriculture, Renewable Energy, Energy Security & Sustainable Development

1. Context

- The Centre is preparing **PM-KUSUM 2.0**, with a dedicated **Agrivoltaics (Agri-PV)** component to enable simultaneous **crop cultivation and solar-power generation** on the same land.

2. PM-KUSUM — Objectives & Structure

- **PM-KUSUM:** *Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyaan*, launched in **2019** by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- Objectives: **de-dieselisation of agriculture, reliable irrigation power, lower energy costs and supplementary farmer income.**
- Original target: **34,800 MW** renewable capacity with **₹34,422 crore** Central Financial Support.
- Three components:
 - **Component A:** Decentralised grid-connected renewable-energy plants.
 - **Component B:** Standalone solar agricultural pumps.
 - **Component C:** Solarisation of grid-connected agricultural pumps, including feeder-level solarisation.

3. PM-KUSUM 1.0 — Results

- **21.77 lakh farmers** benefited by December 2025.
- Around **29 lakh agricultural pumps** had been solarised by September 2026.
- Nearly **11.49 lakh** standalone/off-grid solar pumps installed.
- Over **15.89 lakh pumps** covered through feeder-level solarisation.
- Around **1,726 MW** decentralised solar capacity commissioned on farmers' land.
- Estimated **734.52 million litres of diesel saved** and **12.59 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided.**
- **Overall:** PM-KUSUM demonstrated that solarisation can improve **farm-energy security, reduce diesel dependence and create supplementary income opportunities**, though implementation has been uneven across components.

4. PM-KUSUM 2.0 — New Focus

- Proposed dedicated **Agri-PV component of around 10 GW.**
- **Agrivoltaics** uses elevated/spaced solar panels to facilitate **food production + electricity generation** on the same land.
- Potential benefits for farmers:
 - Income from crops

- Revenue from surplus solar electricity
- Savings in irrigation-energy expenditure.
- Focus is expected on **small and marginal farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), cooperatives and panchayats**.
- Research is being promoted on suitable **crop-panel combinations, panel height, spacing and solar configurations**.

5. Significance

- **Farmer income:** Creates an additional and diversified income stream.
- **Land-use efficiency:** Enables **food + energy production** from the same land.
- **Energy security:** Reduces dependence on diesel and conventional electricity for irrigation.
- **Climate resilience:** Provides supplementary income against **monsoon and crop-price risks**.
- **Decentralised energy:** Expands renewable generation closer to rural demand.
- **Clean agriculture:** Supports renewable-energy expansion and reduction of agricultural emissions.
- **Annadata → Urjadata:** Farmers can become both **food and energy producers**.

6. Challenges

- **Crop productivity:** Excessive shading can reduce yields; designs must be crop- and region-specific.
- **Small holdings:** Fragmented land makes individual projects difficult; **FPO/cooperative aggregation** can improve viability.
- **High upfront cost:** Solar structures, irrigation integration and grid connectivity require substantial investment.
- **DISCOM viability:** Reliable grid connectivity and assured, remunerative purchase of surplus electricity are essential.
- **Research gap:** India's diverse agro-climatic conditions require **location-specific Agri-PV models**.
- **Implementation gap:** Uneven performance under PM-KUSUM 1.0 highlights the need for stronger financing, State capacity and institutional coordination.

7. Way Forward

- Promote **crop- and region-specific Agri-PV models** through field research and agricultural universities.
- Use **FPOs, cooperatives and panchayats** to aggregate fragmented land and reduce individual farmer costs.
- Provide **concessional finance** and targeted support for small and marginal farmers.
- Ensure **grid connectivity and assured power procurement by DISCOMs** through transparent mechanisms.

- Keep **agricultural productivity as a core performance indicator**, alongside solar generation.
- Ensure farmers retain **land ownership and a fair share of energy revenues**.
- Strengthen convergence with **irrigation, rural electrification and agricultural schemes** for integrated implementation.

Onus on legislature to make marital rape punishable: SC

Bench says though it recognises the individual autonomy of married women, both the Indian Penal Code and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita exempt marital rape from being considered a crime

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday guaranteed safety and security to sexually abused married women, but questioned if courts can direct rape prosecutions against husbands when the penal law exempts marital rape from criminal liability.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant made a point that though it recognised the individual autonomy of married women, the second exception to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) states that “sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape”.

Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaced the IPC in 2023, has carried forward the exemption given to marital rape under Section 375 though statutorily raising the age-threshold of the wife to 18.

 A person in a matrimony subjected to involuntary sexual intercourse is definitely a victim... The question before us is whether the State defines it as ‘rape’ or not

JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
Supreme Court judge



“This is the law as it stands, rightly or wrongly. It is a penal law. Before a constitutional court renders a verdict that the exception is unreasonable or manifestly arbitrary, can we permit a prosecution on that score? Is it within the domain of a prosecutor to prosecute a person when there is a clear exemption under Section 375 or Section 63,” Justice Joymalya Bagchi questioned.

The primary case before the Bench is an appeal filed against a 2022 decision of the Karnataka High Court, which held that a husband could be charged with rape if he had forced himself on his wife. The High Court had relied on the Justice

J.S. Verma Committee report of 2013 which had found the exception regressive. The High Court Bench had observed that “a man is a man; an act is an act; rape is a rape, be it performed by a man the ‘husband’ on the woman ‘wife’”. It had noted that “no exception under law can be so absolute that it becomes a licence for the commission of a crime against society”.

But the Supreme Court questioned the High Court’s logic on Wednesday. “Can a court order prosecution until the constitutional validity of the exception is examined and, if needs be, declared *ultra vires* or read down. It

is the law right now, constitutional or otherwise,” Justice Bagchi debated.

Definition of rape

While Justice Bagchi agreed that a “person in a matrimony subjected to involuntary sexual intercourse is definitely a victim”, he said “the question before us is whether the State defines it as ‘rape’ or not”.

The court mooted that it may be for the legislature to decide if an act should be made a crime.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, who appeared for the wife in the Karnataka case, said there was enough elasticity to interpret the present law and justify the High Court’s decision to order prosecution for rape. She also noted that the age of consent in Section 63 has been raised from 16 to 18 years.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the exception for marital rape must continue until the top court took a final call on its reasonableness.

4. Marital Rape Exception: Supreme Court Examines the Limits of Judicial Intervention

Source: The Hindu

GS Subject: GS-2 — Judiciary, Fundamental Rights, Gender Justice & Criminal Law

1. Context

- The **Supreme Court** has questioned whether courts can direct prosecution for marital rape when the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** continues to exempt marital rape from the offence of rape, indicating that the issue of criminalisation may ultimately require **legislative action**.

2. Existing Legal Position

- **Section 63 of the BNS** retains the marital rape exception:
 - Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his wife, **provided the wife is 18 years or above**, are not treated as rape.
- The BNS replaced **Section 375 of the IPC** but retained the exception while raising the age threshold from **15 to 18 years**.
- In **Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)**, the Supreme Court had already read down the exception for wives **below 18 years**, recognising sexual intercourse with a minor wife as rape.

3. Present Supreme Court Issue

- The case arises from a **2022 Karnataka High Court judgment** that permitted prosecution of a husband for rape despite the marital relationship.
- The Supreme Court recognised that:
 - A married woman subjected to **non-consensual sexual intercourse is a victim**.
 - The key question is whether such conduct should legally be classified as **“rape”**.
- The Court questioned whether it can itself remove or alter the statutory exception when doing so could effectively **create criminal liability**, or whether this policy decision belongs to Parliament.

4. Constitutional Dimension

- **Article 14 — Equality:** Differential treatment of married and unmarried women can raise concerns of unequal protection of law.
- **Article 21 — Life and Personal Liberty:** Bodily autonomy, dignity, privacy and sexual autonomy are central to individual liberty.
- **Consent:** Marriage cannot logically be treated as permanent or unconditional consent.

- **Separation of powers:** Criminalisation and prescription of punishment are primarily legislative functions; judicial review must operate within constitutional limits.

5. Earlier Reform Efforts

- The **Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2013)** recommended removing the marital rape exception, emphasising that marriage should not provide immunity for sexual violence.
- The **Delhi High Court's split verdict** in the marital rape challenge demonstrated the complexity of balancing constitutional rights, criminal law and legislative policy.
- The issue is now before the Supreme Court for determination of the **constitutional validity and legal consequences of the exception**.

6. Significance

- **Bodily autonomy:** Affirms that marriage does not extinguish an individual's right over her body.
- **Gender justice:** Addresses a potential gap in protection available to married women.
- **Constitutional morality:** Tests whether a historically recognised marital distinction remains compatible with **Articles 14 and 21**.
- **Judicial restraint:** Highlights the limits of courts in creating or substantially altering criminal offences.
- **Legislative accountability:** Places responsibility on Parliament for a comprehensive decision after considering social, legal and evidentiary concerns.
- **Social transformation:** Challenges the assumption that marriage creates implied or perpetual sexual consent.

7. Challenges

- **Defining the offence:** Clear distinction is required between consensual marital relations and criminal sexual violence.
- **Evidence:** Sexual violence within the private sphere can create difficult evidentiary and investigative issues.
- **Misuse concerns:** Safeguards may be required against false complaints without weakening genuine victims' access to justice.
- **Criminal-law framework:** Reform would require clarity on **definition, punishment, evidence and procedure**.
- **Institutional balance:** Need to maintain an appropriate balance between **judicial review and legislative law-making**.
- **Social attitudes:** Legal change must be accompanied by awareness that **consent remains essential within marriage**.

8. Way Forward

- Parliament should undertake a **comprehensive review of the marital rape exception** in light of Articles 14 and 21.
- Any reform should establish **clear definitions, proportionate punishment and procedural safeguards**.
- Strengthen **police sensitisation, medical assistance, counselling and speedy trials** for survivors.
- Promote **gender and consent awareness** alongside legal reform.
- Ensure safeguards against misuse while keeping the justice system **accessible and survivor-centric**.

India, Sri Lanka sign three defence sector MoUs during Rajnath's visit

The agreements cover upgrading L70 guns for Sri Lankan Air Force and cooperation between the two countries' National Cadet Corps, National Defence Colleges; this is the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in nearly 40 years

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday pledged India's continued support to Sri Lanka during a meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo, as the two countries inked three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on defence equipment and training.

Mr. Singh's visit, the first by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in nearly 40 years, and the agreements come over a year after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lan-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo on Wednesday. ANI

ka in 2025, when seven MoUs, including an overarching defence sector agreement, were signed.

The MoUs signed on Wednesday pertain to the

upgradation of L70 Guns for the Sri Lankan Air Force, and cooperation between the National Cadet Corps and the National Defence Colleges of the

two countries.

During President Dissanayake's meeting with Mr. Singh, the two sides held "extensive discussions on further strengthening the existing defence, economic, maritime and regional partnerships between India and Sri Lanka", the Presidential Media Unit said in a statement.

Mutual interests

Further, Mr. Dissanayake briefed Mr. Singh on Sri Lanka's recently-launched islandwide programme to combat drug trafficking.

An official release from the Indian government said the President recalled his interactions with Mr.

Modi and reiterated that "Sri Lanka would never allow its territory to be used for any activities inimical to India's security interests".

President Dissanayake's office said he emphasised that Sri Lanka makes decisions "taking into consideration both national and regional interests", and that, as a sovereign State, Sri Lanka enters into various agreements with countries around the world while remaining mindful of regional security".

The statement from his office added that the leaders paid "special attention" to the fisheries issue in the Palk Strait.

5. India–Sri Lanka Defence Partnership: Deepening Maritime Security Cooperation

Source: The Hindu

GS Subject: GS-2 — India–Sri Lanka Relations, Indian Ocean Region, Maritime Security & Neighbourhood First

1. Context

- During Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh's visit to Sri Lanka**, India and Sri Lanka signed **three MoUs** to strengthen defence capabilities, institutional cooperation and youth exchanges.
- It was the **first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in 38 years**, signalling renewed strategic engagement.

2. What the New Cooperation Covers

- **Defence capability:** India will upgrade **six L70 guns** of the Sri Lankan Air Force through a Government of India grant.
- **Defence education:** Cooperation between the two **National Defence Colleges** for strategic studies, professional education and knowledge exchange.
- **Youth engagement:** Cooperation between the **National Cadet Corps (NCC)** of both countries, including youth/cadet exchanges.
- **Disaster resilience:** India also supported Sri Lanka's post-cyclone reconstruction through the construction of **three Bailey bridges**.

3. From Defence Assistance to Maritime Security Partnership

- The relationship is increasingly centred on **shared maritime security** rather than only military hardware.
- Key areas of cooperation:
 - **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**
 - Search and Rescue (SAR)
 - Counter-narcotics and anti-piracy
 - Combating human trafficking and smuggling
 - Joint exercises and capacity building
 - **HADR** and disaster-response cooperation
- Cooperation through platforms such as the **Colombo Security Conclave** further strengthens a regional security architecture.

4. Why Sri Lanka Matters to India

- **Geostrategic location:** Sri Lanka lies close to major Indian Ocean sea lanes and is therefore important for India's maritime security and trade interests.
- **Neighbourhood First:** Strengthens India's role as a reliable security partner and first responder in the neighbourhood.
- **MAHASAGAR:** Supports India's vision of a **secure, stable and prosperous Indian Ocean**.
- **Regional stability:** A capable and stable Sri Lanka contributes to security against piracy, narcotics trafficking, illegal fishing and other transnational threats.
- **Strategic trust:** Defence education, youth exchanges and capacity building create long-term institutional and people-to-people linkages.

SEOUL

North Korea builds new Yongbyon uranium enrichment facility: IAEA



REUTERS



North Korea has built a new uranium enrichment facility at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex, and started operating an expanded annex at its Kangson enrichment site, the nuclear watchdog IAEA said. The IAEA said the developments in North Korea's nuclear programme violated UN Security Council resolutions. REUTERS

6. North Korea Expands Uranium-Enrichment Infrastructure

Source: Reuters

GS Subject: GS-2 — International Relations, Nuclear Non-Proliferation & Global Security

1. Context

- The **IAEA** has reported that North Korea has constructed a **new uranium-enrichment facility at the Yongbyon nuclear complex** and has begun operating an expanded enrichment facility at **Kangson**, indicating continued expansion of its nuclear infrastructure.

2. Yongbyon & Kangson — Key Nuclear Locations

- **Yongbyon:** North Korea's **main nuclear complex**, located in **North Pyongan Province, north of Pyongyang**.
 - It hosts major elements of North Korea's nuclear programme, including **uranium-enrichment facilities and nuclear reactors**.
 - The newly identified **two-storey enrichment building** is the **second enrichment facility at Yongbyon** and could accommodate up to **28 centrifuge cascades**.
- **Kangson:** An additional enrichment site **near Pyongyang**, where an annex constructed in 2024 has reportedly started operations.
- **Why these locations matter:** The presence of enrichment facilities at **both Yongbyon and Kangson** indicates that North Korea's capacity to produce enriched uranium is becoming **larger and geographically dispersed**, making monitoring and containment more difficult.

3. Concerns

- **Nuclear weapons capability:** Increased enrichment capacity could enable greater production of **weapons-grade nuclear material**.
- **Verification deficit:** The IAEA has had **no inspectors inside North Korea since 2009** and therefore relies mainly on satellite imagery and open-source information.
- **Regional security:** Expansion of North Korea's nuclear capability heightens security concerns for **South Korea and Japan** and complicates stability in East Asia.
- **Non-proliferation regime:** The IAEA considers the continued development of North Korea's nuclear programme a **violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions**.