



## Current Affairs of the Day

### Rajnath Singh takes a sortie on P-8I maritime aircraft

1. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh undertook a sortie on a Navy P-8I maritime patrol aircraft and witnessed first-hand its long-range surveillance and anti-submarine warfare capabilities. It is imported from the USA.
2. During the mission, long-range surveillance, electronic warfare, imagery intelligence, ASW missions and search and rescue capabilities employing the state-of-the-art mission suite and sensors were demonstrated, the Navy said.
3. The induction of P-8I aircraft in 2013 has significantly enhanced the Indian Navy's persistent surveillance operations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), it noted.
4. These aircraft have been utilised along the International Border, the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control to keep an eye on adversaries' movement, an official noted.





## Supreme Court frees Perarivalan

1. The Supreme Court invoked its extraordinary powers to do complete justice under Article 142 of the Constitution and ordered the release of A.G. Perarivalan in former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case.
2. Perarivalan is currently on bail. The apex court had commuted his death penalty to a life sentence for murder in 2014.
3. The court held that the Tamil Nadu Council of Ministers' advice on September 9, 2018, to pardon Perarivalan was binding on the Governor under Article 161 (Governor's power of clemency) of the Constitution.
4. The Governor had no business forwarding the pardon plea to the President after sitting on it for years together.

### Non-exercise of power

1. No provision under the Constitution has been pointed out to us nor any satisfactory response tendered as to the source of the Governor's power to refer a recommendation made by the State Cabinet to the President of India.
2. In the instant case, the Governor ought not to have sent the recommendation made by the State Cabinet to the President. Such action is contrary to the constitutional scheme.
3. It said the Governor's delay to decide Perarivalan's pardon for more than two years has compelled the court to employ its constitutional powers under Article 142 to do justice to Perarivalan.
4. After all, the court said, a Governor's non-exercise of power under Article 161 of the Constitution was not immune from judicial review.

### In an expeditious manner:

The court observed, that the President and the Governor must exercise their clemency powers under Articles 72 and 161, respectively, within the "bounds of constitutional discipline" and in an "expeditious manner".

### Governor is a shorthand for State govt.: SC

1. The Governor of a State is "but a shorthand expression for the State government" while exercising powers of clemency under Article 161 of the

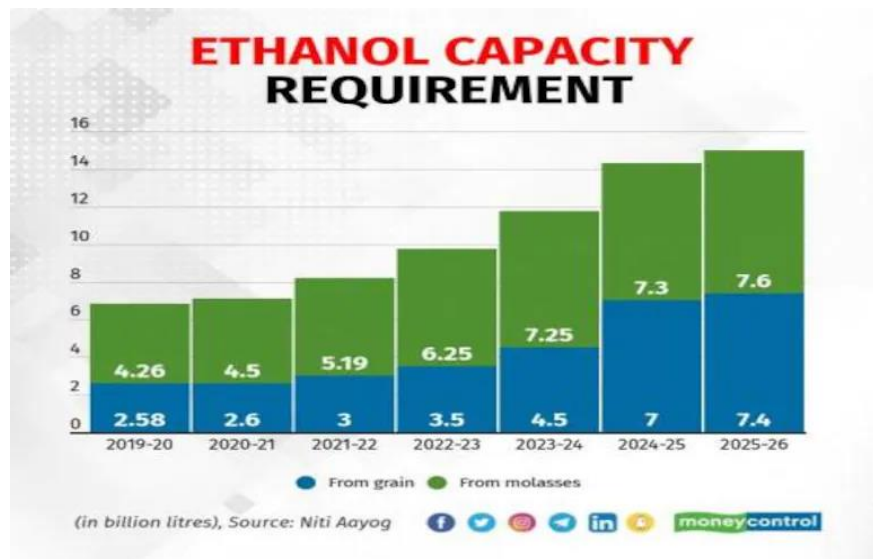


Constitution, the Supreme Court said in its judgment releasing Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convict A.G. Perarivalan.

- The court referring to Constitution Bench judgments, recorded that “in the matter of exercise of the powers under Articles 72 and 161, the two highest dignitaries (President and Governor) in our constitutional scheme must act not on their own judgment but in accordance with the aid and advice of the Ministers”.

## Ethanol blend in petrol to be raised to 20% in 3 years

- The Union Cabinet approved amendments to the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, to advance the date by which fuel companies have to increase the percentage of ethanol in petrol to 20%, from 2030 to 2025.



The policy to introduce 20% ethanol in petrol will take effect from April 1, 2023.

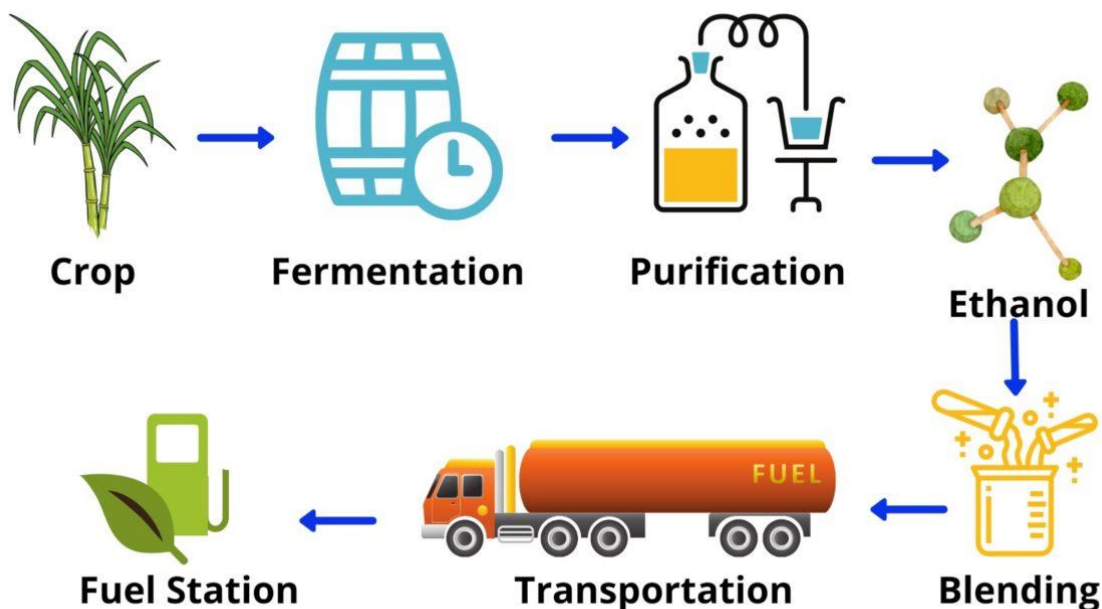
- A statement from the government said the new policy would allow more feedstock for producing biofuel and foster the development of indigenous technologies.
- A 2021 report by the NITI Aayog said that “immense benefits” could accrue to the country by 20% ethanol blending by 2025, such as saving ₹30,000 crores of foreign exchange per year, increased energy security, lowered carbon emissions, better air quality, self-reliance, better use of damaged foodgrains, increased farmers’ incomes and investment opportunities.



4. India achieved 9.45% ethanol blending as of March 2022, according to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The Centre projects that this will reach 10% by the end of the financial year 2022.

### Impact on vehicles

1. A 10% blending of petrol does not require major changes to engines but a 20% blend could require some changes and may even drive up the prices of vehicles
2. A greater percentage of blending could also mean more land being diverted for water-intensive crops such as sugar cane, which the government currently subsidises.
3. The NITI Aayog projects an ethanol demand of 10.16 billion litres by 2025. The current ethanol production capacity in India of 4.26 billion litres derives from molasses-based distilleries and 2.58 billion litres from grain-based distilleries.





## Past seven years warmest: WMO

1. The past seven years were the warmest on record, and 2021 did not see record-breaking temperatures because of a La Niña event at the start and end of the year, according to a report by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).
2. La Nina is a cooling of surface temperatures in the Central Pacific. While this had a temporary cooling effect, it did not reverse the overall trend of rising temperatures. The average global temperature in 2021 was about 1.11 ( $\pm 0.13$ ) degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.

## Record heat

1. The report comes even as north, central and western India reel under an onslaught of pre-monsoon heat waves, with temperatures in March breaching century-old records.
2. Four key climate change indicators — greenhouse gas concentrations, sea-level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification — set new records in 2021, according to the report.
3. Extreme weather led to economic damage estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars and triggered shocks for food, water security and displacement that worsened in 2022.

## NHRC flags pollution effect on human rights

1. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued an advisory to the Centre and State governments on preventing, minimising and mitigating the impact of environmental pollution and degradation on human rights.
2. The NHRC said that despite “having one of the world’s best statutory and policy frameworks for environment protection”, India was facing a serious problem of pollution and ecological degradation preventing the enjoyment of basic human rights.

## Reforms suggested:

1. The advisory focuses on the punishment of polluters; prevention and mitigation of vehicular pollution; and transparent processing of approvals and clearances under environmental laws.



2. The Union and State governments should make efforts to ensure effective and expeditious punishment of polluters and violators of environmental laws. These efforts should include strengthening Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) and other regulatory authorities.
3. The commission said PCBs should create a separate investigation and prosecution wings, as well as carry out regular training sessions for staff.
4. It also recommended that “High Courts should establish Special Environmental Courts and ensure speedy trial of the cases involving a violation of environmental laws”.

<b>MAINS DAWP</b>	<p><i>Q1. Despite having one of the world’s best statutory and policy frameworks for environmental protection, India is facing a serious problem of pollution and ecological degradation preventing the enjoyment of basic human rights. Critically discuss.</i></p> <p><i>Q2. “The constitutional conclusion is that the Governor is but a shorthand expression for the State government” Comment.</i></p>
<b>MCQs</b>	<p><i>Q. This extraordinary stone statue of a famous Kushana King was discovered in 1911 in Uttar Pradesh and is housed in the Mathura Museum. Identify the King.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Rudradaman I</li> <li>b. Pulkesin II</li> <li>c. Menander</li> <li>d. Kaniska</li> </ol>

