

1. Why the Supreme Court Struck Down Retrospective Green Clearances**What the Supreme Court Ruled**

The Supreme Court invalidated:

- A 2017 notification by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) that allowed environmental clearances after project work had begun.
- A 2021 Office Memorandum (OM) that created a standard procedure for such post facto clearances.

The Court also barred the Centre from issuing similar orders in the future, stating they violate environmental laws and citizens' rights.

**What Was in the 2017 Notification?**

The 2017 notification:

- Gave industries a one-time six-month window to apply for environmental clearance after starting work or operations without approval.
- Covered cases where companies had:
 - Started operations
 - Expanded beyond permitted limits
 - Changed product mix without prior clearance

This bypassed the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process, which is mandatory under the 2006 EIA notification. The EIA process includes:

- Project screening
- Environmental impact analysis

- Public hearings
- Final expert review and approval or rejection

Why the Centre Introduced It

The government justified the move by stating:

- It was better to bring violators into the compliance system rather than leave them unregulated.
- Violators would be made to pay for environmental damage, removing any unfair economic advantage.
- All cases would be assessed centrally and allowed only if legally permissible at the site.

An expert panel under S R Wate (former NEERI director) reviewed these cases and met 47 times between 2017 and 2021. The 2021 OM introduced an SOP to handle such violations, following a National Green Tribunal directive.

Supreme Court's Reasoning

The Court strongly criticized the Centre for:

- Protecting violators instead of enforcing environmental law.
- Violating Article 21 (right to life and a healthy environment) and Article 14 (equality before law).

The Court reminded the Centre:

- Of its promise to the Madras High Court that the 2017 notification was a one-time exception.
- That even a one-time exception violates constitutional rights.

The judges also pointed to real-world consequences like Delhi's pollution levels to stress the dangers of lax environmental enforcement.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: Indian Express

2. ISRO's 101st Satellite Launch Fails: A Rare Setback for PSLV

Recent Mission Failure: PSLV-C61



The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) 101st satellite mission failed recently. The PSLV-C61 rocket, carrying the EOS-09 Earth observation satellite, experienced a failure in its third stage. The exact cause is still under investigation.

This was only the third failure out of 63 PSLV launches—a rare event for India's most reliable launch vehicle.

What is a PSLV?

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is a type of rocket used to carry satellites into space. PSLV is

ISRO's most-used and most reliable launch vehicle. It successfully launched major missions like:

- Chandrayaan-1 (2008)

- Mars Orbiter Mission (2013)
- A record 104 satellites in a single launch (2017)

Structure of PSLV

PSLV has four stages:

1. PS1 – Solid fuel with 6 strap-on boosters
2. PS2 – Liquid-fueled engine (Vikas engine)
3. PS3 – Solid fuel for high thrust post-atmosphere
4. PS4 – Two liquid-fueled engines for final adjustments in orbit

It is also cost-effective, making it popular globally for launching foreign satellites.

Previous PSLV Failures

1. 1993 – PSLV-D1 Failure
 - Mission: To launch IRS-1E, a remote sensing satellite
 - Cause: Software failure
 - Outcome: The rocket failed to reach orbit and crashed into the sea

2. 2017 – PSLV-C39 Failure

- Mission: To launch IRNSS-1H, a regional navigation satellite
- Cause: Heat shield failed to separate
- Outcome: Satellite couldn't be deployed, and the mission failed

The heat shield protects the satellite during launch. It is supposed to separate at ~120 km altitude. In this case, the satellite remained trapped inside the shield, preventing deployment.

About the Recent EOS-09 Mission

- Payload: 1,700-kg Earth observation satellite with Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)
- Orbit Targeted: 597 km Sun-synchronous polar orbit (same time pass over a location daily)
- Use: High-resolution imaging in all weather conditions

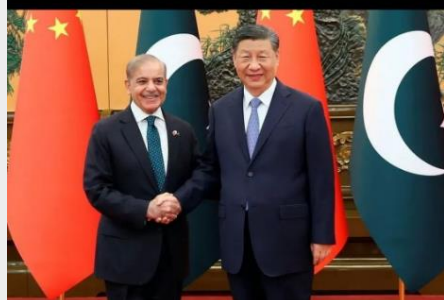
This failure follows another setback earlier in 2025, when a GSLV mission failed to place the NVS-02 navigation satellite in the correct orbit.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. China: Support for Pakistan and Trade Deal with US

China Vows Unwavering Support To Its 'Iron-Clad Ally', Pakistan After Ceasefire With India



1. China Supports Pakistan After India-Pakistan Ceasefire

- On May 10, India and Pakistan announced a ceasefire.
- China expressed willingness to play a constructive role and spoke to Indian and Pakistani leaders.
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi:
 - Told India's Ajit Doval that China condemns terrorism.
 - Told Pakistan's Ishaq Dar that Pakistan has made major contributions to the fight against terrorism.
- Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif praised China as a "trustworthy friend."

- India showed evidence of a Chinese-made missile (PL-15) shot down during Operation Sindoor.
- Taiwan backed India, calling its actions against cross-border terrorism legitimate.

Upshot:

China supported Pakistan's narrative while avoiding mention of its own role in blocking UN action on terror groups. Taiwan's support for India was one of the strongest global statements, despite limited diplomatic ties with India.

2. US-China Tariff Deal Brings Relief

- On May 12, China and the US agreed to significantly reduce tariffs, helping ease tensions from their ongoing trade war.
- US tariff on Chinese goods dropped from 145% to 30% (including a 20% fentanyl-related surcharge).
- China reduced its tariff on US goods from 125% to 10%.
- A new dialogue mechanism was set up between trade officials to prevent future escalations.

Upshot:

Both sides want economic stability and trade cooperation.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: The Hindu

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