

Demand for sixth schedule in Ladakh

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Indian Polity and governance

Why in News?

The Union government has revoked the detention of activist Sonam Wangchuk under the National Security Act (NSA), nearly 6 months after his arrest amid the Ladakh movement seeking statehood and protections under the Sixth Schedule.

- **Sixth Schedule - Articles 244(2) and 275(1)** provides autonomous governance to tribal areas through **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)**.
- **Objectives** - Protect tribal identity, land, and customs and ensure self-governance.
- **Applicable areas** - Applicable Only in Northeast India - Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram.
- **Key Features of Sixth Schedule -**

1. Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)	30 members (26 elected + 4 nominated by Governor)
2. Legislative Powers	Land, forests (except reserved), customs, marriage, inheritance. Requires Governor's assent
3. Judicial Powers	Village courts for customary law disputes.
4. Financial Powers	Levy taxes, collect land revenue.
5. Limited Applicability of Laws	Parliament/State laws apply only with modifications.

Sixth Schedule demand in Ladakh

- **Demographic Argument** - 97% population are Scheduled Tribes.
- **Post-2019 Concerns** - After abrogation of **Article 370**, fear of *Land*

alienation, Job competition, Cultural dilution.

- **Environmental Protection** - Fragile Himalayan-glacial ecosystem needs local control.
- **Demand for Greater Autonomy** - Existing councils lack legislative & judicial powers.

Existing Governance in Ladakh

- Union Territory without legislature.
- **Two councils** - Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Kargil Autonomous Hill Development Council, statutory bodies, not constitutional (unlike ADCs).

Government's Current Approach

- Instead of Sixth Schedule, Centre proposes:
- **Reservation & Domicile** - Up to **85% reservation** and **15-year domicile rule**.
- **Article 371-Type** - Safeguards like Article 371A and Article 371G
- **Strengthening Hill Councils** - More administrative & financial powers.
- Proposal for new councils in new districts.
- **Cultural Protection** - Recognition of local languages (Bhoti, Purgi etc.)

Quick Facts

- **Disputed Areas in Ladakh**
 - **Indo - China Border** - Aksai Chin, the Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Depsang Plains, Demchok, and the Gogra-Hot Springs region.
 - **India - Pakistan Border** - Shaksgam Valley, Siachen Glacier

References

1. [The Indian Express | Sixth Schedule in Ladakh](#)
2. [Ministry of External Affairs| Sixth Schedule](#)