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OPEN HORIZON

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“YOU HAVE TO BE BURNING WITH AN IDEA, OR A PROBLEM, OR A WRONG THAT YOU WANT TO RIGHT. IF YOU’RE NOT PASSIONATE ENOUGH FROM THE START, YOU’LL NEVER STICK IT OUT”.

– STEVE JOBS

ORGANISATION’S NOTE

OPEN Horizon is **EDSTAR’S** monthly publication of contemporary issues and current affairs analysis. It is in fact a collective effort, by experienced educators in varied themes, of identifying current affairs in light of the Competitive Exams, supplementing them with background information, explaining their related dimensions, lending them a generalist viewpoint and thus producing critical notes for the preparation of to-the-point syllabus.

Keeping these things in mind, we, at **EDSTAR**, are always in the process of evolving our self so as to help aspirants counter the challenges put forward by competitive exams.

We hope that the initiative by **EDSTAR** will be to the liking of our students, readers and aspirants.

Thanks

Best Wishes

It is commitment that transforms the vision of success into actual success. Commitment stands first on the list of values and priorities of successful people. Being committed thus requires that a person is fully engaged in her endeavours and remains conscious and persistent enough to realize her life goals.



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NEWS OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Mahendragiri: Odisha's Second Biosphere Reserve

The Odisha state government has recently **proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri**. It is a mountain in the Gajapati district of the state. It is at an altitude of 1,501 metres. **Mahendragiri is also the second-highest peak in the state.**



- The 5,569-square kilometre Similipal Biosphere Reserve is Odisha's first such reserve and was notified May 20, 1996.
- The hill ecosystem acts as a transitional zone between the flora and fauna of southern India and the Himalayas.
- Mahendragiri is inhabited by the Soura people, a particularly vulnerable tribal group as well as the Kandha tribe.
- The hills have diverse vegetation.

- The rich flora in Mahendragiri represents 40 per cent of the reported flora of Odisha, with around 1,358 species of plants.
- Twenty-nine of the 41 species of threatened medicinal plants found in Odisha according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature are found in the biosphere reserve area.

Similipal Biosphere Reserve

- The Similipal Biosphere Reserve lies within two biogeographical regions: **the Mahanadian east coastal region of the Oriental realm and the Chhotanagpur biotic province of the Deccan peninsular zone.**
- **Volcanic sedimentary rocks are aligned in three concentric rings and accentuate the area's geologic formations.**
- **The highest peak in the Similipal hill range is Khairiburu (1,168 metres). Numerous waterfalls and perennial streams flow into major rivers,** such as the Budhabalang, Baitarani and Subarnarekha.

- The biosphere reserve has the **largest zone of Sal in all of India.**
- Altogether, the biosphere reserve is home to 42 mammal species, 264 bird species, 39 reptile species and 12 amphibian species. Moreover, approximately 52 fauna species are endangered.
- *Paradoxus jorandensis* is an example of a valuable and endemic fauna species within the area.
- Altogether, 1,265 villages are located within the biosphere reserve. Approximately 73% of all inhabitants are Aborigines.
- Two tribes, the Erenga Kharias and the Mankirdias, inhabit the reserve's forests and practise traditional agricultural activities.

About Mahendragiri biosphere reserve

- Mahendragiri was the cradle land of the early civilization of Kalinga.
- The mythology refers to the Mahendra as a sacred place being one of the seven Kulagiris or seven principal chains of mountains in India.
- The seven mountains designate the seven ancient doors of heaven.
- The six other Kulagiris or Kulaparbats are Malaya, Sahyadri, Parijatra, Shuktiman, Vindya and Malyavaan.
- The puranic or mythological literature attach great sanctity to this place being the seat of Parasurama's penance and sacred land for pinda dana.
- **Area and Location:** Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve is around 470,955 hectares and is spread

over Gajapati and Ganjam districts in the Eastern Ghats.

- **Similipal Biosphere Reserve is Odisha's first such reserve** and was notified May 20, 1996.
- This ecosystem acts as a transitional zone between the flora and fauna of southern India and the Himalayas, making the region an ecological estuary of genetic diversities.
- This is according to a feasibility report prepared by the Biosphere Reserve Committee for the proposed project.
- Once the protected archaeological remains of Mahendragiri were listed in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- **Community:** **Mahendragiri is inhabited by the Soura people**, a particularly vulnerable tribal group as well as the Kandha tribe.
- The hills have diverse vegetation, according to the report of the proposed Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve. Their livelihood security is intricately linked to the biodiversity and other local natural resources of the hill complex.
- The watershed of Mahendragiri hill complex drains into Rushikulya, Vamsadhara, Bahuda river systems and numerous big and small streams.
- **Flora:** The rich flora in Mahendragiri **represents 40 percent of the reported flora of Odisha**, with around 1,358 species of plants.
- **Fauna:** The faunal diversity of the hills consists of 388 species of animals, including 27 species of

mammals, 165 species of birds, 23 species of snakes, 15 species of amphibians, three species of turtles and 19 lizards.

Soura people

- They are a Munda ethnic group from eastern India. They live in southern Odisha and north coastal Andhra Pradesh. The Soras mainly live in Gajapati, Rayagada and Bargarh districts of Odisha.
- Other names: They are known by various names such as Savara, Sabara, Sora, and Soura.
- Language: The Soras speak Sora, a Munda language
- They practice shifting cultivation, with a few gradually taking up settled agriculture.

India's Maritime Doctrine

Recently, soon after Joe Biden became the president of the US, the new US secretary of defence visited India. The interesting takeaway of this visit was the specific mention to pursue enhanced cooperation between the Indian armed forces and the US maritime forces. This underlined the strategic importance of India in US foreign policy, especially Indo-Pacific engagements. Since Independence, India has enjoyed an advantageous position in the Indian Ocean, primarily accorded through its geography. Moreover, the lack of direct competition after the end of the Cold War allowed India to continue with its limited maritime approach while retaining the role of a key Indian Ocean player. However, **there are many challenges in India's maritime policy.**

Challenges in India's Maritime Doctrine

Silos Approach in the Indian Ocean: India's political class has divided the Indian ocean into many sub-regions. **Traditionally, India draws a line with Mauritius and Seychelles as its areas of strategic collaboration in the Indian Ocean.** In terms of sub-regions, the priority is in the northern (Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal), and eastern Indian Ocean (the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca). Due to this, the western Indian Ocean and the eastern coast of Africa still continue to be in the maritime periphery in India's foreign policy.

Lesser Hold on Strategic Chokepoint: China's first overseas military base was set up in the western Indian Ocean, in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. Russia too recently acquired a base in Sudan, on the Red Sea coast, between the Suez Canal and Bab-el-Mandeb — a strategic chokepoint in the Indian Ocean. However, beyond the anti-piracy mission, India's presence and maritime engagements with the African coast have been largely ad hoc.

Increasing Chinese Assertiveness: Through the Maritime Silk Road, China engages with littorals and islands across the Ocean. China has consistently aimed to improve its diplomatic, political, and military engagements in the region from Sri Lanka to Comoros, spanning the Indian Ocean in its entirety.

Way Forward

Synchronizing Foreign & Defense Policies: With the **establishment of the Indian Ocean division in the ministry of external affairs (MEA)** in 2016, MEA appears to be undertaking a more active approach. However, the defense establishment has to match foreign policy engagements.

Holistic View of Indian Ocean: The Indian Ocean as China is emerging as the key

competitor to India's interests in the Indian Ocean Region. Thus, there is a need to view the Indian Ocean as one continuous space and understand regional dynamics better.

Continental Bias: India's reorientation toward the maritime domain has not been easy, with generations of foreign and defense service officials focusing and training on continental issues. Further, **the Indian Navy is allotted approximately 14% of the defense budget speaks clearly to the defense establishment's priorities.**

Collaborating With Important Players: India should supplement its partnership with the US with a network of multilateral groups with other middle powers, such as the India-Australia-Japan forum and the trilateral dialogue with France and Australia.

While this is not to discount India's continental troubles, seen in recent crises such as Doklam and Ladakh, there is a need to understand the importance of maritime geography and its link to India's strategic interests and growing competition in the region.

India objects on US Naval exercise



Recently, **India protested against the US decision to conduct a patrol in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** in the western Indian Ocean, rejecting the US' claim that India's domestic maritime law was in violation

of international law. **The US Seventh Fleet announced that one of its warships, USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53), had carried out a Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) west of Lakshadweep Islands, inside India's EEZ, without requesting India's prior consent, consistent with international law. Seventh Fleet is the largest of the US Navy's forward deployed fleets.** India had a close encounter with the 7th fleet during the 1971 war with Pakistan.

Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP)

It involves passages conducted by the US Navy through waters claimed by coastal nations as their exclusive territory. It reaffirms the US policy of exercising and asserting its navigation and overflight rights and freedoms around the world. This communicates that the US does not accept the excessive maritime claims of other nations, and thus prevents those claims from becoming accepted in international law. This is the first time the US Navy has issued a public statement giving details of the operation.

US' Stand

India requires prior consent for military exercises or manoeuvres in its EEZ or continental shelf. India's claim to EEZ is inconsistent with international law (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982). FONOP upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea recognized in international law by challenging India's excessive maritime claims.

India's Protest

India's stated position on the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** is that the Convention does not authorise other States to carry out in the EEZ and on the continental shelf, military exercises or manoeuvres, in particular those involving the

use of weapons or explosives, without the consent of the coastal state. It is only when it is **“military manoeuvres”** in Indian EEZ that nations need to seek India’s permission and not if they are simply transiting through. The term military manoeuvres is not defined anywhere. Seventh Fleet to carry out FON missions in Indian EEZ in violation of Indian domestic law (Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976).

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982

The UNCLOS is an international treaty that **provides a regulatory framework for the use of the world’s seas and oceans**. It lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world’s oceans and seas establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. It enshrines the notion that all problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be addressed as a whole.

Ratification

The Convention was opened for signature in December 1982 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The Convention entered into force in accordance with its article 308 in November 1994, 12 months after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification or accession. Today, it is the globally recognized regime dealing with all matters relating to the law of the sea. **The convention has been ratified by 168 parties, which includes 167 states** (164 United Nations (UN) member states plus the UN Observer state Palestine, as well as the Cook Islands and Niue) and the European Union. An additional 14 UN member states have signed, but not ratified the convention. While India ratified UN Law of the Seas in 1995, the US has failed to do it so far.



Exclusive Economic Zone

According to UNCLOS, **the EEZ is an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea**, subject to the specific legal regime under which the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State and the rights and freedoms of other States are governed by the relevant provisions of this Convention. It is defined as generally extending 200 nautical miles from shore, within which the coastal state has the right to explore and exploit, and the responsibility to conserve and manage, both living and non-living resources.

Indian Law

As per India’s Territorial Waters, **Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976**: The EEZ of India is an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial waters, and the limit of such zone is two hundred nautical miles from the baseline. India’s limit of the territorial waters is the line every point of which is at a distance of twelve nautical miles from the nearest point of the appropriate baseline. All foreign ships (other than warships including sub-marines and other underwater vehicles) shall enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial waters.

Innocent passage: It is the passage that is not prejudicial to the peace, good order or security of India.

Sushil Chandra: Next Chief Election Commissioner



The Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra on April 12, 2021, was appointed by President Ram Nath Kovind as a new Chief Election Commissioner of India. Chandra became the **24th Chief Election Commissioner of the country.** Sushil Chandra, the senior-most Election Commissioner, officially took charge of the new position on April 13, 2021. He **replaced Sushil Arora** who has retired.

On February 14, 2019, Chandra was appointed as the Election Commissioner ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. He worked for the successful conduct of the general elections. With his latest appointment, Chandra will be overseeing the conduct of assembly polls in Goa, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Manipur. He is set to demit office on May 14, 2022. While the term of assemblies in Goa, Punjab, Manipur, and Uttarakhand is set to end in March 2022, the term of Uttar Pradesh assembly will be ending in May 2022.

Constitutional Provisions

Article 324 of the Constitution provides the provisions of Chief Election Commissioner.

The provisions under the article are as follows:

- **Article 324 provides powers to the Chief Election Commissioner to control and direct elections to the state legislature, parliament and to the offices of President and Vice President of the country.**
- The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election commissioners shall be appointed by the President of India.
- It also says that, the Chief Election Commissioner shall be removed from office only on the like grounds of the Supreme Court Judge.
- The State Election commissioner shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Election Commissioner.
- The staff requested by the Election Commission to discharge its functions shall be provided by the Governor of the state and by the President of India.

About the Election Commission of India

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an **autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.** It was established in accordance with the Constitution on 25th January 1950 (celebrated as national voters' day). The secretariat of the commission is located in New Delhi. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. It is not concerned with the

elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for a separate State Election Commission.

Election Commissioner Amendment Act

The **Election Commissioner Amendment Act, 1989** made the Election Commission a **multi-member body**. Under the act, two additional election commissioners were appointed to the Election Commission. However, the decision of the Chief Election Commissioner is final.

Health Minister launches 'Aahaar Kranti' mission



Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister, Health and Family Welfare launched a new initiative called '**Aahaar Kranti**' on April 13, 2021. The initiative aims to spread awareness about a nutritionally balanced diet in India. The motto of the mission is '**Uttam Aahaar, Uttam Vichaar**' that translates to 'Good Diet, Good Cognition'.

It focuses on addressing the problem of hunger and diseases in abundance across India and the world. The initiative will shine a light on the richness and value of India's traditional diet, the miracles of local fruits and vegetables, and

the healing powers of a balanced diet. The initiative will give training to teachers, who will pass on the wisdom to the students, and this will create a flow of information from the children to their families and the society at large. **The initiative will set a model for the world to follow and portray India as a 'Vishwa guru'.**

Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS), **Global Indian Scientists and Technocrats' Forum** (GIST), **Vijnana Bharati** (Vibha) and **Vigyan Prasar**, an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology have come together to launch the mission '**Aahaar Kranti**'. Studies show that India produces two times the calories than it consumes. Still, there are many people lacking access to a nourishing meal in the country. Also, during the pandemic, there is a critical need for a nutritionally balanced diet. Healthy bodies will be able to fight the infection with greater resilience.

Objective

The initiative '**Aahaar Kranti**' will focus on addressing the problem of hunger and diseases in abundance across India and the world. The initiative will shine a light on the richness and value of India's traditional diet, the miracles of local fruits and vegetables, and the healing powers of a balanced diet. During the online launch of the mission, the Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan noted that the first day of Ma Annapurna's Chaitra Navratri is an apt day for launching a welfare programme such as '**Aahaar Kranti**'.

Malnutrition in India

- According to UNICEF, India is at the tenth spot among countries with highest number of underweight children. Also, the

organisation says that India is at the seventeenth spot among countries with highest number of stunted children. Both the problems of stunting and underweight are caused by malnutrition.

- Malnutrition is the major contributing factor to one-third child deaths in the country.
- According to the recent National Family Health Survey, **the percentage of stunted children in 2015-16 was 38.4%. The percentage of children wasted were 21%. Wasting is prevalent in Goa, Punjab, Karnataka, Sikkim, and Maharashtra. More than half of Indian children are anaemic.**
- Apart from children, 23% of women and 20% of men in the country are malnourished.

Raisina Dialogue 2021



Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the **6th edition of the Raisina Dialogue on April 13, 2021**. The inaugural session of the dialogue was also joined by the Prime Minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, and the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. Raisina

Dialogue 2021 was held in a virtual mode from April 13 to April 16. The Dialogue is **India's flagship conference on geoeconomics and geopolitics and is held annually since 2016**. The Dialogue is jointly organised by the **External Affairs Ministry and Observer Research Foundation**. One of the subsequent session was also joined by the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison. Because of the exceptional circumstances due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the dialogue is being conducted in a virtual mode.

Theme of Raisina Dialogue 2021

According to the statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs, the theme of Raisina Dialogue 2021 was **'#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers, and Out of Control'**.

Panel conversation on five thematic pillars

The Ministry of External Affairs informed that over the course of four days (13 April to 16 April), Raisina Dialogue had a panel conversation on five thematic pillars. They are:

- **Whose Multilateralism?**
Reconstructing the UN and Beyond
- **Securing and Diversifying Supply Chains**
- **Global 'Public Bads':** Holding Actors and Nations to Account
- **Infodemic:** Navigating a 'No-Truth' World in the age of Big Brother
- **The Green Stimulus:** Investing Gender, Growth and Development

About Raisina Dialogue

Raisina Dialogue is India's contribution to the global efforts for discovering solutions, providing stability, and identifying opportunities to a century that has already witnessed an eventful two decades. It is a multilateral conference which is held every

year in New Delhi, India. The Dialogue by India is designed on the lines of the Shangri-La Dialogue of Singapore.

Raisina Dialogue was first held in 2016 and since its inception, it has emerged as India's flagship conference on geoeconomics and geopolitics. It is structured as a cross-sectoral discussion, multi-stakeholder, which involves a variety of global policymakers including Cabinet Ministers, heads of state as well as local government officials. Apart from it, the dialogue also welcomes major sector executives, as well as the members of academia and media. The name Raisina Dialogue comes from Raisina Hill. It is an elevation in New Delhi, the seat of the Government of India and the Presidential Palace of India, Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Key Details

- The event saw the presence of Former PM of Sweden, Carl Bildt; Former Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Abbott and Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark.
- The Foreign Ministers of Slovenia, Portugal, Singapore, Romania, Nigeria, Italy, Sweden, Japan, Kenya, Australia, Chile, Iran, Maldives, Bhutan, and Qatar also participated in the event.
- The 6th edition of the dialogue had 50 sessions with the participation of 150 speakers from 50 different countries as well as multilateral organisations.

Objectives of Raisina Dialogue

- To explore future opportunities for Asian integration.

- To explore advancement in integration of Asia with the world
- It also asserts the crucial role played by India in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It also focuses on how India can build a stable, regional and world order.
- It addresses the most challenging issues faced by the global community.

Raisina Hills

Raisina Hill is an area in New Delhi that houses the most important buildings of India namely Rashtrapati Bhavan and the secretariat building that houses Prime Minister Office and several other ministers. The Raisina Hill is surrounded by other important buildings including Rajpath, Parliament of India and India Gate. Earlier, the Viceroy's House was constructed acquiring land from three hundred families in the local villages. This was done under the 1894 Land Acquisition Act. After independence, it was turned into the permanent residence of President of India.

India and France begun 18th edition of Varuna in Arabian Sea

Varuna is a joint naval held between India and France. Varuna-2021 was held in Arabian Sea. The three-day exercise involved high tempo operations including advanced air defence and anti-submarine exercises, fixed and rotary wing flying operations, tactical manoeuvres and surface and anti-air weapon firings. The exercise was aimed to enhance and hone the war-fighting skills of both navies and to demonstrate their ability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the maritime domain. The last edition of

Varuna exercises took place along the Goa coast in May 2019. That was the 17th edition of this exercise. In 2020, French and Indian Navies carried out their first joint patrol from the French island of La Réunion. However, last year due to pandemic Exercise Varuna could not take place in its original format.



In the first week of April itself, India and three other Quad member nations (US, Japan and Australia) joined France in a three-day multilateral exercise 'La Perouse'. The naval exercise was conducted in the eastern Indian Ocean.

The Indian side

The Indian side in Varuna-2021 was led by Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet Rear Admiral Ajay Kochhar and the Indian Navy was represented by its guided missile stealth destroyer INS Kolkata, guided missile frigates INS Tarkash and INS Talwar, fleet support ship INS Deepak, a Kalvari class submarine and the P-8I long range maritime patrol aircraft. On completion of Varuna-2021, INS Tarkash would continue to exercise with the French Navy's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) from April 28 to May 1 to consolidate accrued best practices and enhance interoperability," an official statement said.



The French side

The French side was led by Rear Admiral Marc Aussedat, Commander Task Force 473. However, the Navy was represented by its aircraft carrier Charles-de-Gaulle with embarked Rafale-M fighter jets and E2C Hawkeye aircrafts, Horizon-class air defence destroyer Chevalier Paul, Aquitaine-class multi-mission frigate Provence and tanker Var.

Varuna

The Indian and French Navies have been conducting bilateral maritime exercises since May 1983. It was in 2001, that the exercises were started being called 'VARUNA'. The joint-exercises are held either in the Indian Ocean or Mediterranean Sea. The exercises are aimed at improving Indo-French coordination on capabilities like cross-deck operations, replenishment-at-sea, minesweeping, anti-submarine warfare and information sharing.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Reducing Risk of Zoonosis in Food Production



The World Health Organization (WHO), World Organization for Animal Health and the United Nations Environment Programme have laid down fresh guidelines for governments to reduce the risk of transmission of zoonotic pathogens to humans in food production and marketing chains. Covid-19 has brought new attention to this threat, given the magnitude of its consequences.

Zoonosis

A zoonosis is an infectious disease that jumps from a non-human animal to humans. Zoonotic pathogens may be bacterial, viral or parasitic. They can spread to humans through direct contact or through food, water and the environment. Animals, particularly wild animals, are the source of more than 70% of all emerging infectious diseases in humans, many of which are caused by novel viruses. Most emerging infectious diseases – such as Lassa fever, Marburg haemorrhagic fever, Nipah viral infections and other viral diseases – have wildlife origins.

Significant problems can arise when traditional food markets allow the sale and slaughter of

live animals, especially wild animals, which cannot be properly assessed for potential risks – in areas open to the public. Such environments provide the opportunity for animal viruses, including coronaviruses, to amplify themselves and transmit to new hosts, including humans.

WHO Guidelines

- Emergency regulations to suspend live wild animal sales in traditional food markets.
- Conducting risk assessments for developing regulations to control the risks of transmission of zoonotic microorganisms from farmed wild animals and caught wild animals.
- Ensuring that food inspectors are adequately trained to ensure that businesses comply with regulations to protect consumers' health and are held accountable.
- Strengthening surveillance systems for zoonotic pathogens.

Challenges

Poverty: Leads to increased dependence on animal rearing as a means of livelihood. The intimate human-animal contact puts them at risk for this category of diseases.

Unawareness: Large part of population remains unaware of the basic hygiene routine to be followed.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR): AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. Lack of proper vaccination programmes, poor Sero-surveillance and lack of diagnostic facilities

make the preventive and precautionary approach more difficult.

Indian Scenario

India is among the top geographical hotspots where zoonotic diseases are a major public health issue causing high burden of morbidity and mortality. **Major public health zoonotic diseases in India include** Rabies, Brucellosis, Toxoplasmosis, Cysticercosis, Echinococcosis, Japanese Encephalitis (JE), Plague, Leptospirosis, Scrub typhus, Nipah, Trypanosomiasis, Kyasanur forest disease (KFD) and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF).

Measures Taken

Following Programmes have been launched under **National Centre for Disease Control:**

- Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).
- National Programme for Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance.
- National Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Programme.
- Strengthening Inter-sectoral coordination for prevention and control of Zoonotic Diseases of Public Health Importance.
- National Rabies control programme.
- Programme for prevention and control of Leptospirosis.

Further, experts have underscored the need for the One Health framework in the country. One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach linking human, animal, and environmental health.

Japan's new commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 46%

While the entire world is fighting to reduce the harmful carbon emissions Japan seems to have taken a step forward in this direction. The country, known for its scenic beauty, has declared its new target of reducing carbon emissions by 46% by the year 2050.



Reason for such a decision

1. Japan is a highly industrialized nation. To a large extent, it relies on the use of fossil fuels. At the world scale it occupies the fifth position in terms of carbon emissions. As of 2017 data, Japan is the contributor of about 3.3% of total carbon emissions.
2. Naturally, there has been a continuous pressure from the US on Japan to reduce its emissions.
3. Whether it can be cited as a reason or not but the climate activists have really been phenomena in carrying out their active role in raising their voices against the greenhouse gas emissions in the country. In fact, on the occasion of World Earth Day they gathered outside the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in the city of Tokyo and a rally was conducted where they were seen with banners and placards voicing their opinions.



When was the announcement made?

A world climate summit was being hosted on the 22nd of April by the president of US Joe Biden. As mentioned there has been a continuous pressure on Japan to curb its emissions. Hence, before joining the summit, the Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga made the much necessary announcement.

The announcement

Earlier in 2015 Japan announced its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26% (based on 2013 emission levels) by the year 2030. Now, in view of the ongoing situation, the PM, on 22nd April, 2020, made the announcement to increase the 26% to 46%, i.e., reduction of carbon emission by 46% by 2030. Not only this, he also made a new goal for the country to reach carbon neutrality by the middle of this year that is 2050.

Will Japan be able to keep its promise?

Before the Paris agreement of 2016, the scene was quite different. The Japanese government itself was very reluctant in reducing the carbon emissions. But post the agreement this need to transform Japan into a carbon neutral nation has received importance, mainly by the active environmentalists, local governments and business sectors.

And since then, initiatives have been taken. Business sectors have been playing a pivotal role and have already come up with new ways

to reduce and have also started to incorporate them. This is visible in how by the year 2018, Japan has already engraved its achievement of accounting for around 18% of the world's sustainable investment assets. This is the way that the non-state sectors can actually come forward in order to save Japan.

The government has also started taking steps to decarbonize the nation. Generation of electricity power needs to be totally from decarbonized sources which is not the case still now. The use of fossil fuels must be reduced at any cost even if it means replacement of automobiles. If Japan follows these few points in the near future, then it will definitely touch the heights of being a carbon free country within the stipulated time period.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Govt amends IBC, introduces pre-packaged resolution process for MSMEs

The government amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 by promulgating an Ordinance to provide pre-packaged resolution for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The amendment allows the Centre to notify the minimum amount of default value, not more than Rs 1 crore, for pre-packaged insolvency resolution process.

The government had last year suspended fresh insolvency proceedings for six months from March 25, when a nationwide lockdown was imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus infections. The suspension was extended twice by three months till December 24, 2020 and then March 24, 2021. The Ordinance said MSMEs are critical for India's economy as they contribute significantly to its gross domestic

product and provide employment to a sizeable population, and it is considered necessary to urgently address the specific requirements of MSMEs relating to the resolution of their insolvency due to the unique nature of their businesses and simpler corporate structures.

India currently has about 6-7 lakh companies that are classified as MSMEs and potentially these many could benefit from the newly introduced pre-packaged insolvency framework. A pre-packaged insolvency — in the Indian framework context— is an arrangement where the resolution of a company's business is negotiated with a buyer before the appointment of an insolvency professional. It is a blend of informal and formal mechanisms, with the informal process stretching up to NCLT admission, followed by the existing NCLT supervised process for resolution as specified under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Pre-packs are seen to be a viable alternative to the current corporate insolvency process and would be significantly less time-consuming and inexpensive as against the formal insolvency proceedings.

The Ordinance said MSMEs are critical for India's economy as they contribute significantly to its gross domestic product and provide employment to a sizeable population, and it is considered necessary to urgently address the specific requirements of MSMEs relating to the resolution of their insolvency due to the unique nature of their businesses and simpler corporate structures. "It is considered expedient to provide an efficient alternative insolvency resolution process for corporate persons classified as micro, small and medium enterprises under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, ensuring quicker, cost-effective and value maximising outcomes for all the stakeholders, in a manner which is

least disruptive to the continuity of their businesses and which preserves jobs," it said.

The IBC Amendment Ordinance, 2021 makes available the pre-packaged route to genuine and viable cases, to ensure least business disruption, Soumitra Majumdar, Partner at J Sagar Associates, told news agency PTI "While modelled on debtor-in-possession approach, it vests significant consent rights to the financial creditors, such that the mechanism cannot be misused by errant promoters. Further, adopting the plan evaluation process akin to Swiss Challenge, it retains competitive tension such that promoters propose plans with least impairment to rights and claims of creditors," Majumdar said. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) provides for a market-linked and time-bound resolution of stressed assets.

What Is Pre-Pack Insolvency Or Bankruptcy?

Pre-packaged insolvency (a "pre-pack") is a kind of bankruptcy procedure, where a restructure plan is agreed in advance of a company declaring its insolvency. In the United States pre-packs are often used in a Chapter 11 filing. In the United Kingdom, pre-packs have become popular since the Enterprise Act 2002, which has made administration the dominant insolvency procedure. Such arrangements are also available in Canada under the Companies' Creditors Arrangements Act. Under the IBC, 2016 the standard procedure is the **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)**. The financial slowdown during the COVID-19 saw a scarcity of resolution applicants for the revival of the CD, elongating the stress period and the creditor's expectations. Pre-pack aims to better accommodate the CD, and provides a middle route by adopting the privileges of CIRP and the flexibility of an out-of-court settlement. According to the October 2020 report of the ILC, pre-packs shall effectively blend with the existing formal structure,

enabling the concerned shareholders to choose the process they want. The ultimate aim of the PIRP is to be the primary resolution process and to enable only a minority of cases being handled through CIRP.

Pros Of Adopting Pre-Pack Insolvency

- **Business Continuity** - Conventional insolvency process is usually at a stage where the debtor company is already down in the dumps and is unable to carry on its regular functioning due to lack of funds or complicated regulatory requirements. Part of the secret behind pre-packs is that it entails detection that a company needs debt restructuring at the earliest stage. Therefore, when identified at an early enough stage, even undergoing insolvency through a pre-pack will permit a company to continue its regular working.
- **Maximises the efficiency**, cost and flexibility of resolution plans, along with the binding nature and structure of formal proceedings. (out of court process + court sanctity + high degree of employee retention)
- **Minimal depreciation** of the asset value of the company
- Similar to proceedings under the IBC, which make the approved plan binding on all stakeholders (**Increase's investor confidence**).
- **Less time consuming, cost-friendly** mainly because the resolution is negotiated and agreed upon before initiating the statutory framework. A lot of times, speedy disposal through

pre-pack may be the difference between small businesses thriving after undergoing the process, compared to companies ending up in liquidation under CIRP

- **Confidentiality in terms of informal proceedings** - This does not mean that shareholders are unaware of the proceedings. The rule of negotiating a plan, circulating to creditors and voting, is always applicable. However, the information can be kept away from the general market. It is a very real fear for any company undergoing CIRP that it loses market support and trust. Even big, healthy companies are wary of having any IBC petitions pending against them as it could portray them in a negative light, which is why they usually rush to quash or settle them.

Cons Of Adopting Pre-Pack Insolvency

- A structured and negotiated deal between the parties is likely to be reneged by any of the parties involved since there is a lack of serious repercussions, in the absence of statutory basis.
- Dissenting creditors may hijack a negotiation to delay coming to a consensus. Moreover, in the absence of protection from prosecution under law (similar to section 14 moratorium), a pre-pack negotiation may even trigger a slew of recoveries from creditors under various laws, leading to a fractured dissolution of the debtor, ending up with the least asset value of the debtor assets.

- The UK mode of pre-pack receives only the approval of secured creditors, so there is always the possibility that unsecured creditors will be left high and dry. Further, since a pre-pack is negotiated when the management of the CD is still on board, there is always a chance that the value which is technically due towards unsecured creditors, will be captured or stolen by related parties of the management. This would be like a back door to promoters of a company, which otherwise the Code forbids strictly through Section 29A. This could essentially proliferate bad businesses as connected parties would be taking over the business, meaning thereby, that there is no genuine restructuring. Rather, the debtor gets an opportunity to escape his debts.
- There is a possibility of 'phoenixing'. This refers to companies which are not really insolvent, but just technically insolvent and are allowed to run down to the point of winding up, and then through pre-pack are restructured, arising out of the ashes of the former company, with near-identical persons managing the new company, under a very similar name.
- The regulatory and statutory exemptions that a company enjoys under the CIRP process would also be unavailable for such a process unless it acquires court approval. This is a reason why the JET airways out of court settlement

did not work, as they could not get the necessary exemptions without court intervention. In fact, before it plunged into CIRP, JET was in negotiations with Etihad which was looking to invest. However, a pre-condition by Etihad was that it may be exempted from making an open offer under the SEBI (Acquisition of shares and Takeover) Regulations. Under the Code, this would have been possible. Of course, a CIRP process does not necessarily mean clear exemptions.

The Disinvestment Dilemma: LIC IPO and Its Repercussions

The Government of India has decided on a Policy of Strategic Disinvestment in Public Sector Companies in order to raise funds for welfare spending and maintaining fiscal hygiene. In pursuance of this policy, it has decided to **sell 25% of Government Stake in the Life Insurance Corporation of India(LIC) through the IPO route.**

An IPO or Initial Public Offer is a market tool used by Companies to raise funds in order to fulfil their business requirements like capital expenditure or debt obligations.

The government wants to use LIC's IPO to raise up to Rs. 1 Lakh Crore in order to use those funds for government spending as well narrowing the Fiscal Deficit (gap between revenues and spending). The stake sale is such that the government will still hold 75% of LIC and thus the sovereign backing of the insurer will not be affected.

Economic Perspective and Sense

After the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax(GST) regime in India, there has been a steady increase in the revenue collected by the Government but it has never been enough to fund the Welfare schemes of the Government and thus the Government has had to borrow money from the RBI as well as Market sources to fund the Welfare Schemes for the People. This has resulted in a ballooning Fiscal deficit which has worsened Post-Pandemic and the Union Budget for 2021-22 predicts it at 9.5% of GDP, which is unhealthy from a Monetary Perspective (means that it might lead to high inflation and items could become expensive).

The LIC IPO will help the Government raise the Capital required for Fiscal Year 2021-22 and use that capital to fund welfare as well as narrow the fiscal deficit. It will also help the Government to reduce some of its dependency on external borrowings i.e. Market Institutions. The move will also help improve the transparency and efficiency of LIC as post IPO, LIC will be obligated to share its financial numbers and other Market related information. The Shareholders of LIC will also diversify Post IPO and thus a Collective and Efficient Board will help boost the Insurance Sector in India in which LIC holds 69% Market Share.

Critical Assessment of the proposal

Although the move is intended to address the issue of Fiscal shortfalls in the Budget, it has drawn criticism from various stakeholders as well the political opposition in the Country. The employees of the Life Insurance Corporation have registered their protest regarding it as “anti-people” move. They have voiced their concerns that opening LIC to Private markets is not indicative of better efficiency as many

private sector insurance players in India have failed. Opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi, accused the Centre of running a “Sell Government” campaign.

This criticism is justified as the IPO move can be viewed as fixing a thing that is not broken. The LIC has helped the Government in bailing out various other Public Companies like IDBI Bank in the past. LIC has various stakes in other Public Companies and has helped them with Capital Infusions, taking over their debts etc. like the help provided to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL) in 2018. These are some examples indicative of the good financial health of the Company and thus giving entry to private players in the name of efficiency seems like a misconstrued idea.

The move can also be seen as the Governments bailing itself out by using LIC as a cash cow to paper over its fiscal mismanagement and failure to raise adequate tax revenues. This points to the use of short-term quick fixes to solve a structural Policy problem and does not fare well for the GOI (Government of India)

Allied Disinvestments and the Future Impact

The opening of this piece points to the Policy of Strategic Disinvestment by the Government and thus LIC IPO is not the only arrow in the quiver of the Government. **The Department of Investments and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)** of the GOI has been tasked with other proposals to meet the 2021-22 target of Rs. 2 Lakh Crores worth of Disinvestment.

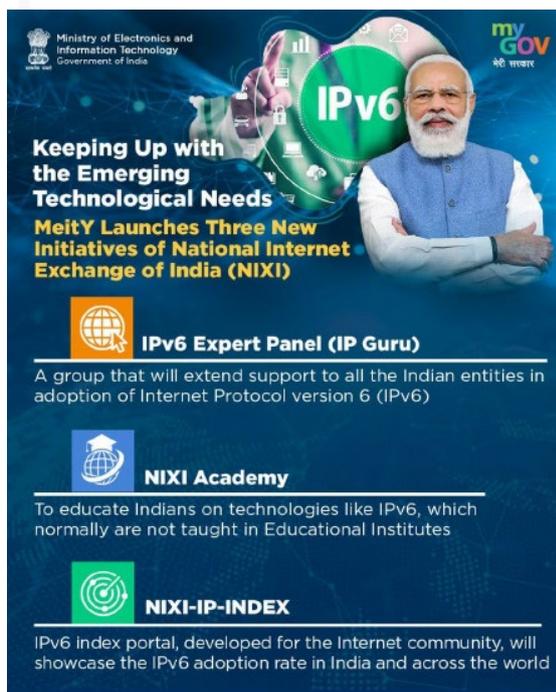
A number of transactions namely BPCL, Air India, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, Pawan Hans among others are to be completed in FY 2021-22 according to the Government. It is evident that the Government has established a Policy Pointer of withdrawing itself from various

sectors and creating space for private players to come in. The future impact would most likely consist of job losses for the employees of these public enterprise, reduced capacity of the state, economic and value chain losses in the short term while in the long run new value chains will be created, the private players will add to the GDP of the country and new employment opportunities for the youth in the private sector albeit without the Government social security net.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

National Internet Exchange of India Initiatives

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology recently launched three new initiatives of National Internet Exchange of India. They were **NIXI Academy**, **IP Guru** and **NIXI-IP-INDEX**.



Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
Government of India

my GOV
मेरे भारत

Keeping Up with the Emerging Technological Needs
MeitY Launches Three New Initiatives of National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)

IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru)
A group that will extend support to all the Indian entities in adoption of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6)

NIXI Academy
To educate Indians on technologies like IPv6, which normally are not taught in Educational Institutes

NIXI-IP-INDEX
IPv6 index portal, developed for the Internet community, will showcase the IPv6 adoption rate in India and across the world

Three Initiatives of NIXI

1. **IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru):** IP Guru is a group to extend support to all the Indian entities who are finding it technically challenging to migrate and adopt IPv6. In addition to this the IPv6 expert group will help in identifying & hiring agency that will help end customer by providing necessary technical support to adopt IPv6. This panel will guide all such Indian entities and help in increasing the IPv6 adoption. It's a joint effort of DOT, MeitY & community to promote IPv6. The expert panel group comprises members from government and private organizations.
2. **NIXI Academy:** NIXI Academy is created to educate technical/non-technical people in India to learn and relearn technologies like IPv6 which are normally not taught in Educational Institutes. The easy-to-use platform helps network operators and educators understand networking best practices, principles and techniques; manage Internet resources better; and use appropriate Internet technologies more effectively. NIXI academy comprises an IPv6 training portal which is developed with the help of various technical experts in order to provide mass training to the community. Through this academy our Internet community will be able to learn from various technical modules. Successful candidates (after passing examination) can take a certificate from NIXI, which will be useful to find/upgrade jobs in the Industry.
3. **NIXI-IP-INDEX:** NIXI has developed an IPv6 index portal for the Internet community. NIXI-IP-INDEX portal will

showcase the IPv6 adoption rate in India and across the world. It can be used to compare IPv6 Indian adoption rate with other economies in the world. NIXI will populate this portal with web adoption in IPv6, IPv6 traffic etc. in coming days. This portal will motivate organisations to adopt IPv6, provide inputs for planning by technical organisations and research by academicians.



National Internet Exchange of India Initiative

About the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)

NIXI is a not-for-profit organization (section 8 of the Companies Act 2013) working since 2003 for spreading the internet infrastructure to the citizens of India through the following activities:

- Internet Exchanges through which the internet data is exchanged amongst Internet Service Providers (ISP's), Data Centres and Content Delivery Network (CDNs).
- IN Registry, managing and operation of .IN country code domain and .BHARAT IDN (Internationalized Domain Name) domain for India.
- Indian Registry for Internet Names and Numbers (IRINN), managing and operating Internet Protocol (IPv4/IPv6).

Transition from IPv4 to IPv6

IP: 'IP' stands for 'Internet Protocol'. It is a set of rules that dictate how data should be delivered over the public network (Internet).

IPv4: IPv4 was the first major version of IP. It was deployed for production in the ARPANET in 1983. It is the most widely used IP version. It is used to identify devices on a network using an addressing system. The IPv4 uses a 32-bit address scheme. Till date, it is considered the primary Internet Protocol and carries 94% of Internet traffic. It provides an addressing capability of approximately 4.3 billion addresses.

IPv6: It is the most recent version of the Internet Protocol. The Internet Engineer Task Force initiated it in early 1994. The design and development of that suite is now called IPv6. This new IP address version is being deployed to fulfil the need for more Internet addresses. IPv6 is also called IPng (Internet Protocol next generation). It has the capability to provide an infinite number of addresses. With 128-bit address space, it allows 340 undecillion unique address space. It can easily accommodate the growing number of networks worldwide and help solve the IP address exhaustion problem.

Benefit of Transitioning to IPv6

- The most well-known benefit that IPv6 offers is the exponential address space, practically inexhaustible in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it allows simple, seamless, and cost-effective connectivity for service providers, enterprises and end-users.
- It is considered especially important with the impending move to 5G, which will massively

increase the total number of devices connecting to the Internet.

- The IPv6 operating systems automatically create two IPv6 addresses. One IPv6 with randomised MAC address in the suffix to hide the device identity and another IPv6 with real MAC address which is only used for end-to-end encrypted applications.
- IPv6 has a privacy protocol to protect end-user privacy. The current internet (v4) lacks effective privacy and effective authentication mechanisms.

The sustainable development and evolution of internet infrastructure is essential to the global cyberspace and digital economy, and IPv6 root server, which controls and manages the internet, can serve as a great tool. Creating such critical infrastructure at the national level is important. As a critical internet resource, the IPv6 root server system is pivotal to manage the security and stability of the internet. It will contribute to in-country expertise building on critical information infrastructure as well as promoting 'a major technological knowledge base within the country', and having a root server within the country would facilitate surveillance by Indian legal authorities.

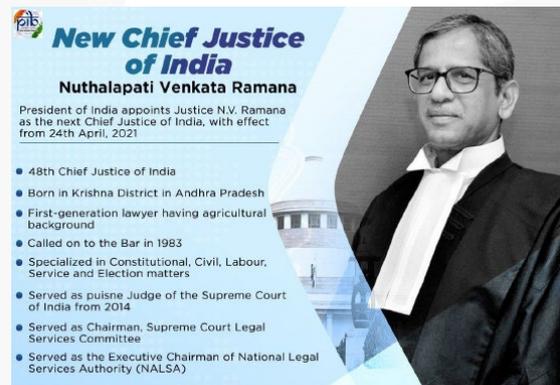
PERSON IN NEWS

Shri Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana appointed as Chief Justice of India

The President of India, in exercise of the powers conferred by **clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India**, appointed **Shri Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana, Judge of**

the Supreme Court, as the Chief Justice of India.

Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana, took over as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India on 24th April, 2021. He is 48th Chief Justice of India. He was called on to the Bar on 10.02.1983. He practiced in High Court of Andhra Pradesh, Central and Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunals, and the Supreme Court of India. He specialized on Constitutional, Civil, Labour, Service and Election matters. He has also practiced before Inter-State River Tribunals.



During his practice years, he was a Panel Counsel for various Government Organizations and as Additional Standing Counsel for Railways in the Central Administrative Tribunal at Hyderabad before rendering services as Additional Advocate General of Andhra Pradesh. Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana served as puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of India from 17.02.2014. He served as Chairman, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee from March 7, 2019 to November 26, 2019. He has also served as the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) since 27.11.2019. Initially he was appointed as a Permanent Judge of Andhra Pradesh High Court on 27.06.2000. He also functioned as Acting Chief Justice of his parent High Court from 10.3.2013 to 20.5.2013.

GLIMPSES OF HISTORY

Remembering Jyotiba Phule, a modern Social Reformer



Jyotirao 'Jyotiba' Govindrao Phule was a prominent social reformer and thinker of the nineteenth century India. He led the movement against the prevailing caste-restrictions in India. He revolted against the domination of the upper castes and struggled for the rights of peasants and other low-caste people. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was also a pioneer for women education in India and fought for education of girls throughout his life. He is believed to be the first Hindu to start an orphanage for the unfortunate children.

Social Movements

In 1848, an incident sparked off Jyotiba's quest against the social injustice of caste discrimination and incited a social revolution in the Indian society. Jyotirao was invited to attend the wedding of one of his friends who belonged to an upper cast family. But at the wedding the relatives of the bridegroom insulted and abused Jyotiba when they came to know about his origins. Jyotirao left the ceremony and made up his mind to challenge the prevailing caste-system and social restrictions. He made it his life's work to hammer away tirelessly at the helms of social majoritarian domination and aimed at emancipation of all human beings that were subjected to this social deprivation. After

reading Thomas Paine's famous book 'The Rights of Man', Jyotirao was greatly influenced by his ideas. He believed that enlightenment of the women and lower caste people was the only solution to combat the social evils.

Efforts Towards Women Education

Jyotiba's quest for providing women and girls with right to education was supported by his wife Savitribai Phule. One of the few literate women of the time, Savitribai was taught to read and write by her husband Jyotirao. In 1851, Jyotiba established a girls' school and asked his wife to teach the girls in the school. Later, he opened two more schools for the girls and an indigenous school for the lower castes, especially for the Mahars and Mangs. Jyotiba realised the pathetic conditions of widows and established an ashram for young widows and eventually became advocate of the idea of Widow Remarriage. Around his time, society was a patriarchal and the position of women was especially abysmal. Female infanticide was a common occurrence and so was child marriage, with children sometimes being married to men much older. These women often became widows before they even hit puberty and were left without any family support. Jyotiba was pained by their plight and established an orphanage in 1854 to shelter these unfortunate souls from perishing at the society's cruel hands.

Efforts Towards Elimination of Caste Discrimination

Jyotirao attacked the orthodox upper castes and termed them as "hypocrites". He campaigned against the authoritarianism of the upper caste people and urged the "peasants" and "proletariat" to defy the restrictions imposed upon them. He opened his home to people from all castes and backgrounds. He was a believer in gender

equality and he exemplified his beliefs by involving his wife in all his social reform activities. Many accused him of acting on behalf of the Christian Missionaries. But Jyotirao was firm and decided to continue the movement. Interestingly, Jyotirao was supported by some Brahmin friends who extended their support to make the movement successful.

Satya Shodhak Samaj

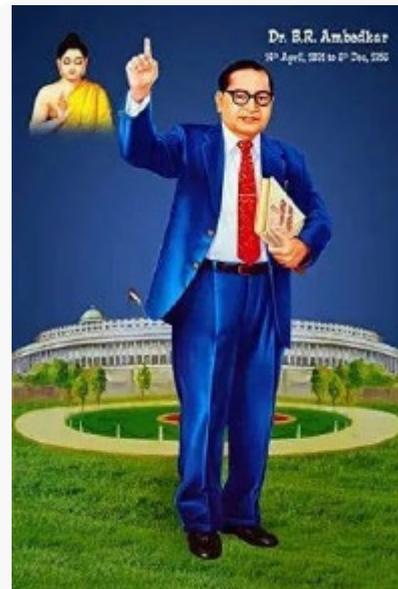
In 1873, Jyotiba Phule formed the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth). He undertook a systematic deconstruction of existing beliefs and history, only to reconstruct an equality promoting version. The purpose of the Satya Shodhak Samaj was to decontaminate the society from caste discrimination and liberate the oppressed lower-caste people from the stigmas inflicted by the upper castes. Jyotirao Phule was the first person to coin the term 'Dalits' to apply to all people considered lower caste and untouchables by the Brahmins. Membership to the Samaj was open to all irrespective of caste and class. Some written records suggest that they even welcomed participation of Jews as members of the Samaj and by 1876 the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' boasted of 316 members. In 1868, Jyotirao decided to construct a common bathing tank outside his house to exhibit his embracing attitude towards all human beings and wished to dine with everyone, regardless of their caste.

Death

Jyotiba Phule devoted his entire life for the liberation of untouchables from the exploitation of Brahmins. Apart from being a social activist and reformer, he was also a businessman. He was also a cultivator and contractor for the Municipal Corporation. He served as Commissioner of the Poona

Municipality between 1876 and 1883. Jyotiba suffered a stroke in 1888 and was rendered paralyzed. On 28 November, 1890, the great social reformer, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, passed away.

B.R. Ambedkar Remembrance Day



"We must stand on our own feet and fight as best as we can for our rights. So carry on your agitation and organize your forces. Power and prestige will come to you through struggle" -
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

B.R. Ambedkar Remembrance Day is also known as Ambedkar Jayanti or Bhim Jayanti which is observed on 14 April to commemorate the memory of B.R. Ambedkar. This day celebrates the birthday of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, an Indian politician, and social rights activist.

Remembering BR Ambedkar on his 130th birth anniversary

The principal architect of the Constitution of India, Ambedkar led a crusade for the upliftment and empowerment of Dalits in the

country. It was on April 14 in the year 1891 when the champion of Dalit rights, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born.

Also known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, BR Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 in present-day Madhya Pradesh's Mhow and he died on 6th December 1956 in Delhi. Every year, Ambedkar's birth anniversary is celebrated to honour his countless contributions in the making of the present-day independent India. Ambedkar Jayanti is also known as Bhim Jayanti and is celebrated as a public holiday across India since 2015.

Ambedkar led a crusade for the upliftment and empowerment of Dalits in the country

He earned doctorates in economics from premier institutes like the Columbia University and the London School of Economics. He was a scholar in disciplines like law, economics and political science.

Babasaheb became a key advocate and campaigner for India's independence from the British rule. He published scores of journals and advocated for Dalits rights. He also made significant contributions toward the establishment of the state of India, drafting of the Constitution and giving ideas that served as the foundation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

From Imperial Bank to SBI, a through back journey

India's largest bank, **State Bank of India (SBI)** was established in 1955 after renaming Imperial Bank of India. On 30 April, 1955 Indian government renamed Imperial Bank to the State Bank of India by an act of parliament. Today, State Bank of India is the largest public

sector bank of India as well as 43rd largest public sector bank in the world. Let's have a look at the history of SBI, previously Imperial Bank of India

Historical origin of SBI

The roots of State Bank of India lie in the first decade of the 19th century when the Bank of Calcutta later renamed the Bank of Bengal, was established on 2 June 1806. The Bank of Bengal was one of three Presidency banks, the other two being the Bank of Bombay (incorporated on 15 April 1840) and the Bank of Madras (incorporated on 1 July 1843). All three Presidency banks were incorporated as joint stock companies and were the result of royal charters. These three banks received the exclusive right to issue paper currency till 1861 when, with the Paper Currency Act, the right was taken over by the Government of India. All three Presidency banks got amalgamated on 27 January 1921, and this re-organised banking entity took the name of Imperial Bank of India. The Imperial Bank of India remained a joint-stock company but without Government participation. The Imperial bank combined the functions of the commercial and a central bank. Later in 1935, when Reserve Bank of India came into force, the Imperial Bank ceased to have a central banking function. It then became merely a commercial bank. Certain business restrictions on it were removed.

The Reserve Bank of India, which is the central bank of India, acquired Imperial Bank of India in 1955. It was renamed on 30 April 1955 to the State Bank of India. This transformation from the Imperial Bank of India to the State Bank of India was given legal recognition through an Act of the Parliament of India, which came into force from 1 July 1955. In 2008, the Government of India acquired the Reserve Bank of India's stake in SBI so as to remove any

conflict of interest because the RBI is the country's banking regulatory authority.

Why Imperial Bank was nationalized ?

Just after India got independence, proposals for the nationalization of the Imperial Bank were under consideration. The nationalisation took place according to the recommendations of Rural Credit Survey Committee in the year of 1955.

The committee recommended that the government of India should establish a strong state-owned commercial bank, which would facilitate rapid expansion of banking facilities in rural areas. For this purpose, it suggested the government to nationalize the Imperial Bank and other state associated banks.

Some basic reasons for the nationalization of the Imperial Bank are as under

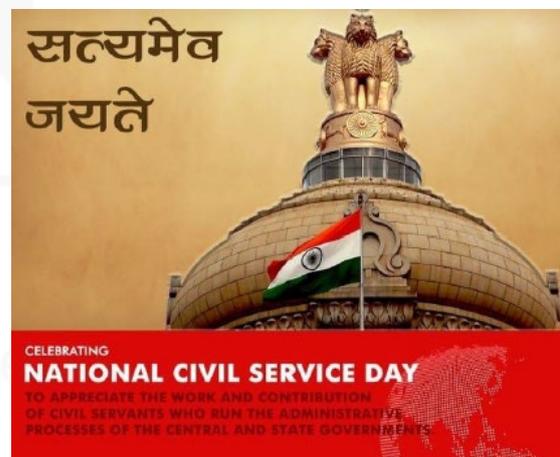
- 1) **Already Functioning as a Semi-government Bank:** The Imperial Bank since its establishment in 1920 had enjoyed a number of privileges and in many ways, it was functioning as a semi-government bank. Being established under a separate Act of Parliament, it acted as the agent of Reserve Bank of India in the places where the RBI did not have its branches. This is why, it was considered more appropriate to nationalize the Imperial Bank.
- 2) **Transfer of Profits to the Government:** The Imperial Bank earned huge profits because of the public confidence on it and because of its association with the government, large amount of government funds are kept with it. Thus, the government considered that it was necessary to transfer the profits arising out of

government funds to the government account.

- 3) **Promotion of Agriculture and Rural Development:** After the Second World War, the agricultural prices had gone up, and the rural areas were not covered by the banking operations. Hence, in order to increase the agricultural produce there was a need to extend credit facilities to the rural areas. To promote agriculture in all respects, the government considered that it was necessary to nationalize the Imperial Bank.
- 4) **Implementation of the Monetary Policy of the Government:** It was the need of the hour. The government required strong commercial base for the implementation of its monetary policy and five-year plans. It also became the root cause for the nationalisation of the Imperial Bank.

OBSERVANCES OF THE MONTH

National Civil Service Day



This day gives civil servants the opportunity for introspection and thinking about future strategies to deal with the challenges being posed by the changing times. The first function of this sort was held in Vigyan Bhawan on 21 April 2006. The reason for this date being chosen is because **Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel addressed the first batch of civil servants in Independent India at the Metcalf house on 21 April 1947.** He referred to civil servants as the 'steel frame of India' in his inspiring speech.

The civil service system is the backbone of the administrative machinery of the country. It is the permanent executive branch of the Republic of India. The policies and schemes are made by the government. The civil servants are the administrators. The civil servants are responsible for implementing all the government policies and schemes successfully up to the root level. It consists of (IAS) Indian Administrative services, (IPS) Indian Police services, (IFS) Indian Foreign services along with central Group A and group B services.

On National Civil Services day, '**Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration**' is awarded. A large number of districts across the country participate in this award program. The officers of central and state governments are awarded by the Prime Minister of India for their extraordinary services in the field of public administration. Under this scheme of awards instituted in 2006, all the officers individually or as a group or as organisation are eligible. The award includes a medal, scroll and cash amount of Rs 100,000. In case of a group the total award money is Rs 500,000 subject to a maximum of Rs 100,000 per person. For an organisation the cash amount is limited to Rs 500,000.

The contribution that civil servants make for the good of society and the nation is immense. This day is celebrated to motivate Civil Service

officers and it is a way of showing appreciation for their work and efforts.

Earth Day 2021



"Save the earth, and the earth will save you"
Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

Earth Day 1970 gave a voice to an emerging public consciousness about the state of our planet — In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, Americans were consuming vast amounts of leaded gas through massive and inefficient automobiles. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of the consequences from either the law or bad press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. Until this point, mainstream America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health.

However, the stage was set for change with the publication of Rachel Carson's New York Times bestseller *Silent Spring* in 1962. The book represented a watershed moment, selling more than 500,000 copies in 24 countries as it raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and the inextricable links between pollution and public health. Earth Day 1970 would come to provide a voice to this emerging environmental

consciousness, and putting environmental concerns on the front page.

Earth Day Today

Today, Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behaviour and create global, national and local policy changes. Now, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day.

As the awareness of our climate crisis grows, so does civil society mobilization, which is reaching a fever pitch across the globe today. Disillusioned by the low level of ambition following the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and frustrated with international environmental lethargy, citizens of the world are rising up to demand far greater action for our planet and its people.

The social and cultural environments we saw in 1970 are rising up again today — a fresh and frustrated generation of young people are refusing to settle for platitudes, instead taking to the streets by the millions to demand a new way forward. Digital and social media are bringing these conversations, protests, strikes and mobilizations to a global audience, uniting a concerned citizenry as never before and catalysing generations to join together to take on the greatest challenge that humankind has faced.



Few easy steps we can take:-

- Plant more trees.
- Reduce plastic wastes.
- Adopt green power.
- Protect endangered species from extinction.
- Practice minimalism.
- Save water.
- Go organic. Go green.

“The environment is where we all meet; where all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share.” – Lady Bird Johnson

Ayushman Bharat Diwas

“We have been listening to the garibi hatao (get rid of poverty) slogan, but it was just an attempt to hoodwink the poor. If the (welfare) schemes were implemented, as promised, the poor in the country would have been better off today”. - PM Modi

Nation celebrates Ayushman Bharat Diwas on 30th April. The day aims to promote affordable medical facilities in remote areas of the country based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census database. It will also promote health and wellness and provide insurance benefits to the poor. **The programme is part of the Indian government's National Health Policy.** It was launched in September 2018 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. That ministry later established the National Health Authority as an organization to administer the program. It is a centrally sponsored scheme and is jointly funded by both the federal government and the states. By offering services to 50 crore (500 million) people it is the world's largest government sponsored healthcare program. The program is a poverty alleviation programme as its users are people with low income in India. The applicant has to pay an

amount of 30 Rs upon application, though there is no charge upon receiving the golden card.

Features

Features of PM-JAY include the following— providing health coverage for 10 crores households or 50 crores Indians; providing a cover of ₹5 lakh (US\$7,000) per family per year for medical treatment in empanelled hospitals, both public and private; offering cashless payment and paperless recordkeeping through the hospital or doctor's office; using criteria from the Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 to determine eligibility for benefits; no restriction on family size, age or gender; all previous medical conditions are covered under the scheme; it covers 3 days of pre-hospitalisation and 15 days of post-hospitalisation, including diagnostic care and expenses on medicines; the scheme is portable and a beneficiary can avail medical treatment at any PM-JAY empanelled hospital outside their state and anywhere in the country; providing access to free COVID-19 testing.

Participation by local people

In May 2020 Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his radio show Mann Ki Baat that the Ayushman Bharat scheme had recently benefited more than one crore people. By May 2020, the scheme had provided more than 1 crore treatments with a value of ₹13,412 crore. The number of public and private hospitals empanelled nationwide stands at 24,432. The Ayushman Bharat Yojana programme announced a special collaboration with the Employees' State Insurance programme in November 2019. From June 2020, the program had entered a pilot to cover 120,000 workers with that insurance at 15 hospitals.

THE IDEAS EXPLAINED

India's rank in Global Gender Gap Index

The World Economic Forum has released the



Global Gender Gap Report 2021. India has seen a decrease in its ranking on the index by 28 places. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One

Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme, Ujjwala Scheme are some the initiatives launched by the government to address the issue of gender inequality. Further, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.

Global Gender Gap Report

About: It was first published in 2006 by the WEF. It benchmarks 156 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment. Over the Index, the highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality).

Aim: To serve as a compass to track progress on relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy and politics. Through this annual yardstick, the stakeholders within each country are able to set priorities relevant in each specific economic, political and cultural context.

India's Position

India is now one of the worst performers in South Asia, **it is now ranked 140 among 156 countries**. In South Asia, Bangladesh ranked 65, Nepal 106, Pakistan 153, Afghanistan 156, Bhutan 130 and Sri Lanka 116. India had ranked 112th among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.

Political Empowerment: India has declined on the political empowerment index as well by 13.5 percentage points, and a decline in the number of women ministers, from 23.1% in 2019 to 9.1% in 2021. However, it has still performed relatively well compared to other countries, ranking at 51 in women's participation in politics.

RIFT WIDENS

Highlights of report

- ▶ According to WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India has closed 62.5% of its gender gap till date
- ▶ India's gender gap on economic participation and opportunity sub-index widened by 3% this year
- ▶ Highest decline on political empowerment sub-index, where India regressed 13.5 percentage points
- ▶ Women's labour force participation rate fell from 24.8% to 22.3%
- ▶ Estimated earned income of women is only one-fifth

of men's, which puts India among the bottom 10

- ▶ India ranks among bottom five in discrimination against women in health and survival sub-index
- ▶ As Covid-19 impact continues to be felt, global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 to 135.6 years
- ▶ Iceland is the most gender-equal nation for the 12th time in 15 years
- ▶ Top 10 gender-equal countries include Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Rwanda, Sweden, Ireland and Switzerland

Education Attainment: In the index of education attainment, India has been ranked at 114.

Economic Participation: The report notes that the economic participation gender gap actually widened in India by 3% this year. The share of women in professional and technical roles declined further to 29.2%. The share of women in senior and managerial positions also is at 14.6% and only 8.9% firms in the country have top female managers. The estimated earned

income of women in India is only one-fifth of men's, which puts the country among the bottom 10 globally on this indicator. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, the income of an average woman is below 16% of that of an average man, while in India it is 20.7%.

Health and Survival index: On this India has fared the worst, ranking at 155. The only country to have fared worse is China. The report points to a skewed sex ratio as the major factor. It says the ratio can be attributed to norms of son preference and gender-biased prenatal sex-selective practices. China and India together account for about 90 to 95% of the estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million missing female births annually worldwide due to gender-biased prenatal sex selective practices.

Global Scenario

Region Wise Rank: South Asia incidentally is one of the worst performing regions, followed only by the Middle East and northern Africa.

Largest Gender Gap in Political Empowerment:

The gender gap in political empowerment remains the largest: women represent only 26.1% of some 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3,400 ministers worldwide. In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state, as of 15th January, 2021. Bangladesh is the only country where more women have held head-of-state positions than men in the past 50 years.

Economic Participation: The countries with the largest gender gaps in economic participation include Iran, India, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Timeframe to Close the Gap: It will take South Asia 195.4 years to close the gender gap, while Western Europe will take 52.1 years.

World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation. It was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests. The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance.

Some major reports published by WEF are:

- Energy Transition Index.
- Global Competitiveness Report.
- Global IT Report
- Global Gender Gap Report.
- Global Risk Report.
- Global Travel and Tourism Report.

Blue Economy: Crucial for India

The World Bank has defined “**Blue economy**” as a “sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem”. India has a 7517 km long shoreline and more than 2 million sq. km of exclusive economic zones—ocean territories adjoining coastal areas where India can exercise its sovereign rights. Very often we forget to count it as one of India’s blessings in terms of resources and we never seem to put them to their best use. There is a lot of unexplored potential as to what can be done with this resource. But we might think putting resources to good use will almost inevitably lead to its destruction and we’ll probably end up polluting the water the same way we polluted our lands. The best we can do is be hopeful and do it in a way that’s sustainable. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14

states “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”

The Blue Economy is envisaged as the integration of Water-based Economy included Inland Water Body & Ocean Economy development with the principles of social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and innovative, dynamic business models. Blue Economy includes from coastal manufacturing and services, maritime trade, shipping, offshore and coastal energy, deep sea minerals, aquaculture and fisheries, and marine-related technologies. **Prime Minister Modi said**, “To me the Blue Chakra or wheel in India’s national flag represents the potential of Blue Revolution or the Ocean Economy. That is how central the ocean economy is to us.” Home to about 18% of India’s population, we have nine coastal states, four union territories, 1,382 islands, and 199 ports built in these areas. Unfortunately, only 12 qualify to be called major ports. All of this existing infrastructure handles approximately 1,400 million tons of cargo each year. But there is still a lot to be desired. Economic Advisory Council to The Prime Minister, Government of India, published a draft policy framework for “India’s Blue Economy” in September 2020.

History And Current Situation

The economic philosophy of the **Blue Economy was first introduced in 1994 by Professor Gunter Pauli at the United Nations University (UNU)** to reflect the needs of future growth and prosperity, along with the threats posed by global warming. The concept was based on developing more sustainable models of development including concepts of engineering based on “**no waste and no emissions**”. The Blue Economy assumed greater importance after the Third Earth Summit Conference - Rio+20 in 2012.

India was among the first in the world to create a Department of Ocean Development in 1981, now the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). Based on the experience of more than three decades, India has come a long way with the launch of new programmes such as “**Deep Ocean Mission**,” “**Oceanography from space**” and “**Launching of the data buoys**” along the Indian coastline. In previous studies it was noted that while there is significant potential for tourism, it was necessary to curb uncontrolled and unplanned tourist activities that cause stress on the carrying capacity of coastal ecosystems, especially those on fragile island territories.

In recent years, there have been a series of initiatives for sustainable development in the maritime domain. These initiatives are catalysts to strengthen the growth of India’s maritime interests and our Blue Economy. In the global scenario India is likely to witness significant growth in the marine sector by efficient and sustainable utilization of ocean resources soon. We don’t know if the number is accurate but **Blue economy contributes around just 4% to India’s GDP**.

Sectors And Stakeholders

There are many people retaining their livelihoods and business because of the ocean. It could be fishermen tugging their boats into the sea, people who earn a livelihood on beautiful beaches, businesses that cater to tourists along the pristine coastlines of Kerala and Goa, shipping companies and port operators and also energy companies who explore the deep seas in the hope of stumbling on oil deposits. There could be more. We need sophisticated last-mile connectivity. We need cruise terminals and marinas, we need shipyards that can build fishing trawlers, luxury cruise liners and container carriers.

The Fishermen

The policy brought up by the government calls for an assessment of the fisheries department—a business that sustains over 4 million people—maybe even more if all the industries fishing feeds are taken into consideration. In India, fishing largely means staying near the coastline, but mid and deep-sea zones are woefully underused. The new policy calls for incentivizing the use of these deeper areas to meet demand from both domestic sources and abroad. The government also wants to have reasonable checks and balances in place to make sure people don’t overfish and put the ecology out of balance. They need to keep an eye out even for areas that are indeed ripe for fishing and nudge fishermen away from unproductive areas. For this, India should deploy a dedicated satellite system for tracking and managing its fisheries sector.

The Deepsea

The deep-sea surface holds copious amounts of minerals and metal deposits. And while we would need major investments in the scientific exploration of oceans, this could be a source of great windfall. Speaking of wind, oceans also extend opportunities to tap into wind and tidal energy and that’s another thing the draft document alludes to.

The Global Stance

The world-over different national and global initiatives are being undertaken to harness the Blue Economy. Countries like Australia, Brazil, U.K., U.S., Russia, and Norway have developed dedicated national ocean policies with measurable outcomes and budgetary provisions. Countries like Canada and Australia have enacted legislation and established hierarchal institutions at federal and state

levels to ensure progress and monitoring of Blue Economy targets.

In summary, the draft policy highlights the vast potential hidden within the oceanic ecosystem and makes some good recommendations of how we can improve the lives of those living along the coastline whilst also preserving marine ecology. India should strive for efficient and sustainable utilization of ocean resources and to integrate and Boost Ocean related capabilities, capacities and skills, with a view to accelerate employment and gross value addition, while safeguarding the environment and in harmony with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Today, the Blue Economy holds the promise of being the next multiplier of economic growth and well-being, provided that the strategy places sustainability and socio-economic welfare at the centre stage. Therefore, the proposed roadmap for evolving a Blue Economy Policy would be a crucial step towards unlocking the potential of economic growth and welfare.

National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

India endorsed the **United Nations Guiding Principles** (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights more than a decade ago. Accordingly, it has to evolve a **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights** (NAP) detailing actions to ensure businesses do not violate human rights. In this pursuit, the Indian government formally announced that it would develop a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in India at the Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva in November 2018. In February 2019, India published a draft NAP on Business and Human Rights, known as the '**Zero Draft**', and also committed to

publishing the final NAP in 2020. However, the final NAP is still not framed yet.

National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights & Its Need

Goal: National Action Plan will provide an overview of India's legal framework setting out the State's duty to protect human rights, set the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and access remedy against business-related human rights violations.

Inspiration: The vision of India's NAP stems from the Gandhian principle of trusteeship that defines that the purpose of business is to serve all stakeholders.

Need: Experts claim that the Covid-19 pandemic is a litmus test for the concept of stakeholder capitalism. The NAP becomes more relevant in the wake of Covid-19 in that the pandemic has exposed several systemic vulnerabilities in how businesses operate. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that, due to Covid-19, 400 million Indian workers are at risk of sinking even deeper into poverty.

International Commitment: The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (of which India is a signatory) envisages the Protect-Respect-Remedy principle while the role of the State is to ensure that all three pillars of the principle are working effectively in reality. Further, the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8) focuses upon the realization of human rights in the business sector.

Cases of Business & Human Rights Concurrence

Several plants were shut down in the last two decades on charges of violating human rights and environmental rights:

- Coca Cola Co's plants in Plachimada (2004), Mehdiganj (2013), and Hapur (2016)
- Hindustan Unilever Ltd's (Mercury) factory in Kodaikanal (2001)
- Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi (2018)

Divergence

There is a law that prevents companies from advertising tobacco near school premises. But tobacco giant ITC Ltd's notebooks, complete with its logo, are available right inside classrooms. Again, seemingly, there is nothing illegal about it. More than a million people die in India each year due to consuming tobacco. However, one of the investors of a tobacco company is Life Insurance Corp (LIC), owned by the Government of India. When children are glued to games like PUBG, the young ones and their parents are blamed. But in a class suit in Canada, parents alleged: "companies hire psychologists, who dig into the human brain and they really made the efforts to make the game as addictive as possible".

Challenges in Implementation of NAP

Extreme Informalization: India faces an issue of extreme informalisation, low-skilled and low-paying jobs, gender wage gap, the prevalence of child labour, and forced/ bonded labour. Social protection, occupational health and safety, unionization, and collective bargaining remain a challenge in general but particularly for informal workers.

High Levels of Dispossession: The dispossession of communities from their right to access and control over land, water, and other natural resources necessary for their lives and livelihoods, is also a critical issue that the NAP must address.

Lack of Grievance Redressal Mechanisms:

Access to remedy poses a major challenge in the effective implementation of NAP. The lack of operational-level grievance mechanisms could be another stumbling block for the rights holders to access remedy mechanisms.

Way Forward

Strengthening CAG: There is a need to encourage CAG to evolve auditing standards that seek to ensure human-rights compliance and extend the same to all public-private partnerships. This should ensure respect for human rights in all cases of public procurement and of public investment.

Strengthening CEC: The Central Election Commissions should be mandated to regulate corporate funding of political parties, including directing mandatory disclosures of donations as well as of any conflict of interests by both businesses and political parties.

Strengthening NHRC and SHRCs: There is a need to expand the powers of the Human Rights Commissions to issue notices to businesses and to create business and human rights ombudsperson to monitor human rights situation in businesses.

Strengthening MSME: India has a significantly large number of micro, small, and medium (MSME) enterprises. The success of India's NAP rests on the ability of the MSME sector to adopt it. The government as well as large companies have a crucial role in building the capacity of the MSME sector through training, awareness, and providing incentives.

Synchronizing Education: Business managers will see human rights only as a risk — not as intrinsic to the business. Thus, there is a need for a proactive attempt to make Business and Human Rights a core part of the management

curriculum. So that every business manager groomed should be a human rights defender.

Embedding Accountability: The rising influence and dominance of technology on the future of work, privacy, and inequality is a growing area of concern in India. The NAP should take steps to embed accountability of technology companies on human rights issues beginning with the rights of workers in the gig economy.

The NAP process is an opportunity for India to demonstrate leadership in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth and position itself as the world's largest sustainable and responsible economy. The NAP can serve as an important tool to guide Indian businesses to redefine their purpose and emerge out of this pandemic more humane.

Role of MGNREGS in the climate crisis



Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) has made immense contributions towards livelihood security and the creation of durable assets in rural areas. While MGNREGA has been a valuable employment tool and safety net, as seen in the migrant crisis, its role in building ecosystems resilient to the climate crisis is being increasingly recognized. A climate-smart MGNREGA can lower the risks posed by the climate crisis while providing legally mandated

demand-driven employment to resource-poor households. Hence, there is a need to bring upfront the scheme's potential in addressing matters of lives and livelihoods while combating the climate emergency.

MGNREGA & Climate Change

Although the MGNREGA was not designed specifically as a climate program, it incorporates three key elements with the potential to **advance pro-poor climate assistance objectives:**

- Social protection through the provision of minimum wage labour;
- The development of small-scale, natural resource-focused infrastructure; and
- A decentralized, 'community-based planning architecture.

Majority of the activities under MGNREGA implemented in the district could qualify as adaptation measures to climate change. Activities such as digging of wells, farm ponds, construction of farm bunds, community wells, community ponds, renovation of old water bodies, plantation, watershed treatment can be considered as measures to climate change adaptation. These activities are further grouped to show their specific contributions in addressing different likely challenges emerging due to climate change.

MGNREGS is a well-established mechanism for planning, delivering, and monitoring expenditure. It can deliver climate finance at scale into the hands of poor rural households — particularly the most vulnerable groups including women and scheduled castes and tribes — based on their priorities.

How can MGNREGA help address climate change?

- **Natural Resource Management:** In 2020-21, of the total expenditure spent on MGNREGA, about two-thirds were on works related to natural resource management (NRM). The mammoth scale of the NRM component in MGNREGA provides a major boost to improving the productive capacity of the land, water, and forest resources.
- **Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Risk:** This will help reduce the vulnerability to climate risk as groundwater availability increases, soil fertility improves, tree cover is enhanced, drought- and flood-proofing measures are put in place.
- **Augmenting Climate Change Adaptation:** A recent study by the Centre for Science and Environment concludes that MGNREGA is the “world’s biggest adaptation program as it harnesses the labour of people to invest in building the wherewithal to fight drought and build resilience”.
- **Enhanced carbon sequestration-** The capacity of MGNREGS to deliver on the mitigation front takes into account that land is both a source and sink of carbon. Land degradation from large-scale destruction of forests, soil erosion and intensive farming accounts for about a quarter of the global greenhouse gases. Trees in agricultural landscapes, better-managed watersheds, forests and

farmlands lead to enhanced carbon sequestration both above and below the ground.

- **Achieving INDC:** As part of its efforts to tackle climate change, **India has to meet three key targets:** building capacity for 40% electric power from non-fossil fuel, cut in emissions by 33-35% from the 2005 level, and create carbon sinks of about 2.5 to 3 billion tons.
 - India is on its way to meet the first two targets but lagging on the third one. Going by present trends, target achievement will prove to be a major challenge.
 - In the Report submitted by the Union government to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the MGNREGA’s contribution to sequester carbon was assessed at 62 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent in 2017-18.
 - This performance needs to be enhanced.

Way Forward

To strengthen MGNREGA and dealing with Climate change linkage, the following needs to be done:

- **Augmenting Financial Resources:** Topping up administrative or convergence funds to strengthen MGNREGA functionaries and workers’ skills to build and benefit from climate-resilient and low-carbon assets. This will make it truly demand-driven and engage more people to work for climate change remediation.
- **Deepening the Scope of Convergence:** There is a need to

deepen the scope of convergence by proactively linking farm assets with climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices. In this context, robust methodologies for measurement and accounting of environmental services can be developed.

- **Strengthening MGNREGA Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** More independent studies and surveys can be conducted that can quantify the scheme's adaptation and mitigation capacity to climate risks. Also, there is a need for the feedback proformas not just the numerical count of works being undertaken but also the environmental services provided.
- **Anticipatory Wage Employment:** Building climate risk information (weather, climate hazards, and climate vulnerabilities), services, and skills to support anticipatory wage employment.

It is time to acknowledge MGNREGA as a climate-smart green employment generation program. In a world that will continue to warm, the rural poor will suffer its worst consequences. As a public intervention, Climate-smart MGNREGA appears to be a step in the right direction.

India's Refugee Policy



Recently, there has been an influx of illegal migrants into India after the military coup and subsequent crackdown in Myanmar. The current plight of the Myanmar's has been preceded by that of another group of Myanmar's, the Rohingya. Historically, India has witnessed an inflow of refugees from many neighbouring countries. The refugee issue poses a problem for the state as it puts an economic burden, may trigger demographic changes in the long term, and poses security risks as well. However, taking care of refugees is the core component of the human rights paradigm. Further, in any case, refugee flows to India are unlikely to end any time soon given the geopolitical, economic, ethnic, and religious contexts of the region. Hence, there is an urgent need today to clinically address the issue of refugee protection in India and put in place appropriate legal and institutional measures.

India's Refugee Policy

- India lacks specific legislation to address the problem of refugees, in spite of their increasing inflow.
- The Foreigners Act, 1946, fails to address the peculiar problems faced by refugees as a class. It also gives unbridled power to the Central government to deport any foreign citizen.

- Further, the **Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019** (CAA) strikingly excludes Muslims from its purview and seeks to provide citizenship only to Hindu, Christian, Jain, Parsi, Sikh, and Buddhist immigrants persecuted in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- Moreover, India is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the key legal documents pertaining to refugee protection.
- In spite of not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, India has had a stellar record on the issue of refugee protection. India has a moral tradition for assimilating foreign people and culture.
- Further, the constitution of India also respects the life, liberty, and dignity of human beings. The Supreme Court in the *National Human Rights Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh* (1996) held that “while all rights are available to citizens, persons including foreign citizens are entitled to the right to equality and the right to life, among others.”

India’s Argument for Not Signing the 1951 Refugee Convention

The definition of refugees in the 1951 convention only pertains to the violation of civil and political rights, but not economic rights, of individuals. For instance, a person, under the definition of the convention, could be considered if he/she is deprived of political rights, but not if he/she is deprived of economic rights. If the violation of economic

rights were to be included in the definition of a refugee, it would clearly pose a major burden on the developed world. On the other hand, this argument, if used in the South Asian context, could be a problematic proposition for India too.

Challenges Associated With India’s Refugee Policy

Refugees vs. Immigrants: In the recent past, many people from neighbouring countries tend to illegally immigrate to India, not because of state persecution but in search of better economic opportunities in India. While the reality is that much of the debate in the country is about illegal immigrants, not refugees, the two categories tend to get bunched together. Due to this, policies and remedies to deal with these issues suffer from a lack of clarity as well as policy utility.

Ambiguity in the Framework: The main reason why our policies towards illegal immigrants and refugees are confused is that as per Indian law, both categories of people are viewed as one and the same and are covered under the *Foreigners Act, 1946*.

Ad-hocism: The absence of such a legal framework also leads to policy ambiguity whereby India’s refugee policy is guided primarily by ad hocism. Ad hoc measures enable the government in office to pick and choose ‘what kind’ of refugees it wants to admit for whatever political or geopolitical reasons. This results in a discriminatory action, which tends to be a violation of human rights.

Discriminatory CAA: The Government of India has passed the *Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)*. CAA envisages providing citizenship to people who are religious minorities in India’s neighbourhood and persecuted by the state. However, CAA is not the answer to the refugee

problem primarily because of its deeply discriminatory nature, as it doesn't include a particular religion under its ambit. Further, many political analysts have dubbed the CAA as an act of refugee avoidance, not refugee protection.

In spite of not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, India has been one of the largest recipients of refugees in the world. However, if India had domestic legislation regarding refugees, it could have deterred any oppressive government in the neighbourhood to persecute their population and make them flee to India.

Privatization of PSBs



Banking plays a very important role and is the key driving force in any economy. However, in recent years, the Indian banking sector has witnessed multiple Public Sector Banks (PSBs) getting scammed and faced huge losses due to high Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). Due to this, many economists have suggested the government privatizing PSBs and now the RBI and the government are contemplating privatizing banks in the sector. However, before taking any decision, the government should actively consider the pros and cons of PSBs remaining nationalized.

Arguments for Banks Remaining Nationalised

Democratization of Banking: Banks in India were nationalized for the first time in 1969. Before which they had been lending 67% of their funds to industry and virtually nothing to agriculture. Also, the commercial banks couldn't lend money to farmers because they were only present in less than 1% of villages. Farmers were unable to get bank loans just when the Green Revolution was getting underway and they needed credit to buy the expensive inputs required to increase output. Thus, nationalizing banks helped in the democratization of banking services of the masses.

Undermining Social Welfare: Public banks open branches, ATMs, banking facilities, etc even in the non-profitable rural areas of India or the poorer sides where the possibility of getting big deposits or making money is less. However, Private banks are not inclined to do so and they may prefer opening such facilities mostly in megacities or urban areas. If the corporate sector is allowed to dominate banking again, profit will become the prime motive rather than the desire to serve the public.

International Precedent: Most East Asian success stories have been underpinned by financial systems effectively controlled by governments. On the other hand, the governments of western countries, where banking is largely in the hands of the private sector, have had to rescue private banks from bankruptcy.

Argument Against Banks Remaining Nationalized

Privatization means selling whole or partially a government-owned company to the private sector or it simply means transferring

ownership to the private sector. This step was taken as a part of a new economic policy, 1991 to liberalize India's economy from being a relatively closed economy. However, in recent years, the following factors have been pushing the Government of India to privatize the nationalized banks.

Bulk of NPAs: The banking system is overburdened with the non-performing assets (NPAs) and the majority of which lies in the public sector banks.

Lack of Regulatory Oversight: PSBs are dually controlled by RBI (under the RBI Act, 1934) and Finance Ministry (under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949). Thus, RBI does not have all the powers over PSBs that it has over private sector banks, such as the power to revoke a banking license, merge a bank, shut down a bank, or penalize the board of directors.

Lack of Autonomy: Public sector bank boards are still not adequately professionalized, as the government still has a major say in board appointments. This creates an issue of politicization and interference in the normal functioning of Banks. This results in the practice called telephone banking, whereby the politicians ringing bank officials with instructions to lend money to their cronies.

Draining of Profits: Private banks are profit-driven whereas the business of PSBs is disrupted by government schemes like farm loan waivers etc. In general, PSBs have to respond to public demand to finance unproductive projects.

Way Forward

Improving Governance: In order to improve the governance and management of PSBs, there is a need to implement the recommendations of the PJ Nayak committee.

De-Risking Banks: There is a need to follow prudential norms for lending and effective resolution of NPAs. In this context, the establishment of the bad bank and speedy resolution of NPAs through the Insolvency Bankruptcy Code steps in the right direction.

Corporatization of PSBs: Rather than blind privatization, PSBs can be made into a corporation like Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). While maintaining government ownership, will give more autonomy to PSBs.

Even though private sector banks have better balance sheets than PSBs, it is very important to consider that Privatization alone would not solve all of the problems faced by the sector. A better solution than privatization may well be giving PSBs autonomy to reform themselves and function free of political interference.

The EU-India-Indo Pacific Cooperation

What does a geopolitical Europe in Asia mean for EU-India relations?



Calls for Europe to define its sovereign interests in Asia have been flourishing amid China's rise. The pandemic laid bare the absolute necessity of clarifying how a geopolitical Europe was to act in Asia. Though in its initial phase, the coronavirus affected EU member states in different scales and to different extents, they almost all were confounded by their heavy reliance on goods and services from third countries. This reliance

undermined Europe's capacity to respond autonomously. The objective here is not to establish a European autarky but for the European Union to decide whom it wants to partner with as a priority.

Indeed, the EU remains in an ambivalent position and approach to its relationship to China. Deemed a systemic rival in 2019, China remains a major trade partner for the EU: The justification for the signature of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) at the end of 2020. However, the signals from China on the ground is that its market does not seem likely to become more open. Beijing is focusing its energy on fostering national industrial champions in order to strengthen its self-reliance: A self-declared goal by Xi Jinping. Consequently, the EU needs to think seriously about expanding its economic partnerships in Asia, beyond China. This EU paradigm shift will help develop new markets, especially allowing for the demand for European business in the Indo-Pacific region to increase, notably in the health sector.

In building its strategic sovereignty, the EU can decide to intensify cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, both bilaterally with major partners, namely Australia, Japan and India and Southeast Asian countries, as well as invest substantially more time and energy in multilateralism and regional organisations. This will need to be a coordinated and comprehensive approach leading to the implementation of the EU-Asia connectivity strategy, revolving around infrastructure development (digital and traditional), fight against climate change and for the protection of biodiversity, fostering health cooperation, ensuring maritime security and the development of business ties. All priorities laid out in the communiqué of the latest EU-India summit, held virtually in July 2020. The

communiqué starts with the following sentence "The leaders decided to strengthen the EU-India Strategic Partnership, based on shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, rule of law, and respect for human rights, aiming at delivering concrete benefits for the people in the EU and India". Until these recent developments, it was no secret that the EU-India relationship was underperforming, as the two partners were attempting to avoid one another. The FTA negotiations deadlock impeded for the rest of the relationship—especially the security dimension—to fully flourish. But, as the region is riven with strife geopolitical rivalries, the time has come to assert that European strategic sovereignty in Asia can only translate in prioritising partnerships that represent its values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights.

Endorsing the idea of a European connectivity strategy in the Indo-Pacific concept

The European Parliament recently commissioned and discussed a report on connectivity and EU-Asia relations that "highlights the fundamental role that connectivity plays in the geopolitical relations of the EU and its Member States and underlines the fact that connectivity, as a fundamental orientation of the European Union, is deeply ingrained in the EU's approach to domestic and international challenges".

Connectivity is the comprehensive and holistic answer to limiting Europe's dependencies in Asia and increasing its capacity to act. As mentioned above, for this strategy to work, the EU will have to rely upon major partners such as Australia, Japan and India to implement the different pillars constituting connectivity: Infrastructure development (digital and traditional), fight against climate change, ensuring maritime security and trade

development. India plays a special role here as it is a player on all these fronts, though the trade dimension may have been, in the past, the one that hindered the advent of a true EU-India strategic partnership.

The European Parliament report explicitly advocates for the elaboration of an EU-wide Indo-Pacific strategy that would be part of the connectivity agenda and as such would tackle cooperation with partners in the region in the realm of military-to-military exchanges and one that “believes that openness, prosperity, inclusiveness, sustainability, transparency, reciprocity and viability should be guiding principles in the cooperation with the Indo-Pacific region”.

This entails for the EU to acknowledge the transformation these partners have undergone in the last years of China’s rise and – until recently – the simultaneous US withdrawal from the international stage. Japan has endorsed a greater role in transforming the region’s trade and technology architecture, while invoking the Indo-Pacific concept more and more as an essential goal in its foreign and security policy. India has moved away from its non-aligned position and is endorsing a new multi-alignment strategy consisting in building strong partnerships with developed economies to pursue its geopolitical goals and strengthen its military presence in the region. As for Australia, ever since it spearheaded the campaign calling for an independent inquiry into the source and propagation of the coronavirus and banned Huawei from its 5G infrastructure development plants, it has fell victim to Chinese economic coercion, namely measures to restrict Australian imports, including levying new tariffs and imposing bans that severely hit the Australian economy.

While this context should not be the main justification for the development of an EU-

wide connectivity strategy in the Indo-Pacific, it does provide solid grounds for the EU to embody an alternative path to its Indo-Pacific partners, as well as the opportunity to lay the foundation for a renewed transatlantic partnership in the region.

Recommendations

Make EU-India central force behind reconfiguration of vaccine supply chains – also with ASEAN countries. Cooperation – and competition – on global health has become a central element of the current geopolitical environment and of the EU’s engagement with Asia. The realisation of the Union’s dependency came with the subsequent realisation of the need to mitigate said dependency. Hence, as the “pharmacy of the world”, India has the means to play a significant role in becoming a manufacturing hub in the field of health. India’s ambassador to the EU recently reiterated New Delhi’s seriousness in becoming an alternative to China.

The COVID crisis has provided an opportunity for European governments and the private sector actors in health to review and adjust their value chains for greater health sovereignty. In fact, increasing supply security of critical health goods could go hand in hand with a general review of supply chains that aims to increase protection from economic coercion more broadly, which is where the Indo-Pacific dimension could help step up the EU-India partnership. The pandemic has been a witness of a convergence between the European and Indian agendas on global health cooperation and given India’s extensive capacity to produce non-mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, it could be a destination of choice for the EU to mass-produce it. One option could be for the EU and India to reach an agreement that Johnson & Johnson and Sanofi-GSK, which

both have plants in India, increase their manufacturing capacities there. These could also be used in the COVAX initiative for ensuring the equitable access to the vaccine to all, especially in the developing world. The Indo-Pacific dimension could enable the EU and India to include ASEAN countries, such as Vietnam, to play a critical manufacturing role too.

Third country participation in PESCO

In October 2020, EU member states agreed on conditions to allow countries outside the EU to participate in joint defence projects, namely, to provide access to the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). They will be accepted if their projects have “**substantial added value**” and are in line with EU values. Amid the pandemic, third country participation could translate into improving preparedness for future crises. As a key security provider in Asia and one that entertains defence cooperation with several EU member states, it could constitute an interesting applicant as a third country participant in PESCO, especially when it comes to maritime security. Indeed, India had increased its engagement with neighbouring countries before the pandemic by providing medical equipment and military assistance.

Such an experiment would demonstrate that third country participation in PESCO can go beyond the more traditional partners the EU would go to for defence cooperation and could open new avenues to deepen the strategic partnership, all the while asserting the reality of an EU-India-Indo-Pacific security triangle.

Resurge in Covid Cases and Economic Recovery

The last fiscal year, FY 2020-21 was no less than a roller coaster ride for India’s economy, witnessing nationwide partial and complete lockdowns, curfews and increase in unemployment with no projections of the economy returning to the 2019-20 levels of GDP even in FY 2021-22. However, with the easing of lockdown restrictions, these projections were revised favourably in late 2020.



Just when there was growing optimism over India’s economic rebound, when the IMF upgraded India’s GDP forecast for FY 21-22 to 12.5%, the second Covid-19 wave has come as a rude shock to businesses and consumers alike. India’s daily new cases have been hitting higher peaks every day, with the country contributing almost 20% to the global tally of fresh daily cases. The situation is worse than last year’s peak situation where the only sigh of relief is India now has access to vaccines.

India’s Economic Recovery

Factors Facilitating the Growth: The gross tax collections are estimated to have touched ₹20.16 lakh crore (₹20.16 Trillion), up ₹1.2 lakh crore from the revised estimates detailed in the Union Budget a few months ago. The Centre’s indirect tax collections have touched

₹10.71 lakh crore in 2020-21, even higher than the collections in 2019-20. Indicators like the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), tractor & two-wheeler sales, Goods and Services Tax collection, E-way bills, and rail freight traffic showed sustained growth in 2021. The exports figures have also seen a huge jump standing at 31 billion dollar.

Impacts of Resurging Covid Cases and Lockdowns

Highest Week-on-Week Decline as per NIBRI: Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI), is a weekly tracker of the pace of normalisation of economic activity. The index reached 99 points in February, 2021 but slipped down to 90.5 in the month of April, registering its biggest week-on-week fall. The reason for this downfall is mainly the second wave of Covid-19.

City-wise Impact: States like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Chhattisgarh, which are witnessing the highest surge in COVID-19 cases, account for over 30% of India's GDP. Even partial lockdowns and curbs in these states will impact economic activity majorly and if the lockdowns are extended further due to uncontrolled infections, the damage will be even more extensive.

Contraction in Industrial Output: The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has witnessed the sharpest contraction in the month of February 2021 (since August 2020), at the rate of 3.6%. The recent spike in Covid-19 cases has raised concerns over the economic recovery, especially with the imposition of harsher restrictions on activities now being a possibility. The restrictions currently being imposed such as night curfews and weekend lockdowns are economically less painful. However, if the situation worsens, harsher measures cannot be ruled out.

Manufacturing and Other Sectors: While manufacturing may not be directly hit due to partial lockdowns, the impact on the contact services sectors like hospitality, travel, and tourism will have a multiplier effect, as these sectors have strong backward linkages with other sectors of the economy.

Way Forward

Significant Role of Vaccines: The only effective way to safeguard the economy from another massive disruption is to relax both demand and supply for vaccines. More than 10 crore shots have been administered so far, however, it accounts for only 8% of the country's population that has received at least one shot, the US and the UK, in contrast, have vaccinated close to 50% of their total population. Vaccination is a key element in controlling the second wave of Covid-19, but a shortage of vaccines could slow the progress of vaccine rollout. Therefore, the government shall now increase the reach of the vaccines and make the eligibility criteria for vaccination more expansive.

Reducing the Tax Levies: The RBI, which has been stridently seeking a reduction in the tax levies, foresees inflation averaging 5.2% in the April-June quarter. The price pressures are unlikely to ease significantly in the near term, unless the Centre and the States bite the bullet by agreeing to forego some near-term revenue from petroproducts and reduce fuel taxes.

Role of Policy Makers: More efforts and better policies are needed on the part of Policymakers, to nurse back demand and this must be done without letting quickening inflation undermine purchasing power and overall economic stability. Moreover, policymakers should not lose sight of the fact that India is better equipped to fight the virus compared to last year. At this juncture, the

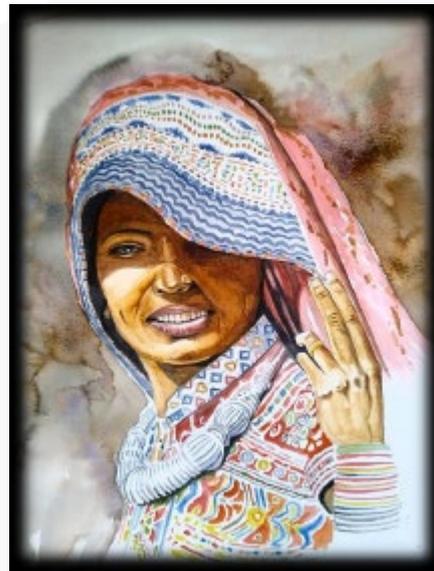
primary objective of governments, both at the Centre and states, should be to ramp up the vaccination drive.

Expenditures as Proposed in the Union Budget: The support from the rebound in global growth and implementation of the Union Budget's proposed capital expenditures will reinforce India's economic revival. Moreover, the agricultural growth and rural demand have been quite robust until now, which is also expected to support growth.

If the choice between flattening the Covid-19 curve and economic hardship was difficult last year, it will be even more difficult this year, as businesses and workers are still nursing the wounds of the first lockdown. The second wave has coincided with the beginning of the new fiscal year which means that even the conservative revenue targets in the Budget could be jeopardised. In all these difficult circumstances, the only silver lining that India has is the availability of the Vaccines and its ongoing Vaccination Drive. It must be taken advantage to the fullest.

Status of tribal women in India

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." You must do the thing you think you cannot do." – Eleanor Roosevelt



There is always a rise in Concern that focus on the women in tribal studies that has been very recent. It emerged out of common interest and then it is related with women's the issues the world over. The value of the system that is responsible for governing greater Indian society and it has been in the process of change. There has been a shift in the picture of tribal women who are accordingly invariably portrayed as enjoying a better social status than their counterparts in the larger Indian society.

From the post-Independence the tribal society in era that has been witnessed to unequally change, which has been most marked in respect of culture, modes of making the living and social differentiation.

The discrepancy in the description of women in tribal society is mainly due to the way that scholars conceive the term status. One can discern the two broad views. Initially it refers to women's that plays the role in the system, which will describe the rights and duties. In this, status which is linked with the role in the system. Correspondingly, women's status is determined and assessed by taking into consideration the mutual duties of the sexes and the safeguards provided for the protection of each sex against the high-handedness of the other.

The other usage of the term status is in the sense of prestige and honour, which may be studied in terms of their legal status and opportunities for participation. In the studies of women, however, such a distinction is often overlooked. Status as prestige and honour can only be studied in relation to values. Tribes have been primarily studied either with reference to the values of the European Enlightenment viz. freedom, equality and fraternity or in relation to values prevalent in the dominant society. In short, in studying tribes in relation to the other, values that has invariably that been either the universal values of the Enlightenment or the values of the larger Indian society in which freedom is often scorned and hierarchy is much valued. Hardly any attempt has been made to study them in terms of the values prevalent in tribal society.

Condition of women in changing tribal Society

Women in Changing Tribal Society Some sociologists and social anthropologists have questioned the dichotomous conception of Indian society constructed during the colonial period. The British administrator scholars conceived tribes as those who not only practised animism/tribal religion as opposed to Hinduism but also as those who lived in complete. Though the distinction is maintained

between tribe and civilisation, the two are not treated as isolated but in interaction with each other (Sinha 1958). Consequently tribal society has not been viewed as static but in the process of change. Change has been conceived as moving in a number of directions. Of these, the tradition that has been dominant has been one that has focused on change from tribe to caste.



Assumptions Underlying Tribal Studies

There are some assumptions that is underlying Tribal Studies underlying the accounts on tribes in general, with the particular reference to women, is a basic assumption that these groups are primitive, savage and backward. This is driven home, time and again, through accounts of their modes of making a living, technology, food habits, lifestyle and more importantly, through representations of their bodies. Tribes were invariably represented as half-clad, with some leaves and grass fibres and, at times, naked. This is seen in vivid pictorial forms in anthropological and other works to make the point of their primitive existence.



Welfare of Tribal Women

The major policies of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs aim to ensure the overall development of both Scheduled Tribe men and women. However, within the Scheduled Tribes, women often suffer from a greater disadvantage.

- I. Ministry of Tribal Affairs therefore, while trying to ensure that women benefit equally from general schemes also has some special schemes meant **for the benefit of ST women and girls as given:**

Scheme of Girls & Boys Hostels for STs: Under the scheme, Central assistance is given to States / UTs / Universities for construction of new hostel buildings and / or extension of existing hostels. State Governments are eligible for 100% central share for construction of all Girls' hostel and also for construction of Boys' hostel in the Naxal affected areas.

- II. **Scheme of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas:** The objective of the scheme is to provide residential schools for STs to increase the literacy rate among the tribal students and to bring them at par with other population of the country.

- III. **Scheme for Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts:** This scheme is being implemented in 54 identified low literacy Districts where the ST population is 25% or more, and ST female literacy rate is below 35%, or its fractions, as per 2001 census.

Why racism is a problem?

Racism is a prejudice, discrimination exhibited by a large group of people against people from different race or ethnicity, due to differences in their physical appearances.

We can outline a few broad categories in which racism and racial discrimination occur: day to day life in major areas, such as employment, education, housing and access to social services; human rights violation against member of Roma communities; hostile attitudes to and stigmatization of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers; increasingly widespread anti-Semitic incidents; intensification of Islamophobia; use of racist, anti- Semitic and xenophobic arguments in political discourse; and negative climate in public opinion, which plays a crucial part in the emergence of expressions of racism and intolerance in society. These trends, of course, vary in scale from one country to another, but are significant enough to be of concern.

According to the World Values Survey, the second most racist country is India, where people from other countries are treated differently by some Indian people, based both on skin colour and country of origin. African people are especially affected by racism in India, denied living accommodations and even attacked and killed.

People aren't born with racist ideas or attitudes. Racism is something that is learned. There remain a small minority of people who believe that some races are superior to others. For example, while most people in Australia today accept the diversity of Australian society, some also believe racial groups should not mix. A belief in racial superiority or purity can lead to racial hatred as we can see the recent incident in USA that was a racist police officer name Derek Chauvin killed innocent African-

American man George Floyd. There are many incident like this which are happening these days.

Racism causes harm to those who are on the receiving end. It hurts individuals, communities and our society at large. Studies show that experiencing racism has profound effects on people's health and welfare. The effects can include feelings of sadness and anger, even anxiety and depression. The regular experience of racism can lead to people withdrawing from work or study, and diminish their quality of life. It can also hurt people's freedom and dignity. Those who endure racism can be made to feel they have less freedom, or are second-class citizens.

There are also some constitutional provisions for combating racial discrimination i.e. **articles 14 and 15 are the most important guarantees ever envisaged by the Constitution of India where under Right to Equality that addresses the issues of discrimination and provide equal protection of laws in India** and **Article 14** further confers the Right to Equality before the law and equal protection of laws throughout the territory of India and **Article 15** prohibits the discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. But only these provisions are not enough until we change our heart and mind also. Instead of reacting negatively, we should take time to understand the people and embrace that difference.

We believe in a world where everyone has the same opportunities, and everyone can express love and respect in action. No one has the right to judge the people on his physical appearance, everyone should be judged by his or her talent.

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