

SURESH PATEL APPOINTED AS NEW OVC



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DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD


We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" would help students, especially beginners save time and streamline their preparations with regard to Current Affairs. A content page and an Appendix has been added segregating and mapping the content to the syllabus.



It is an appreciable efforts by Vedhik IAS Academy helping aspirants of UPSC Civil Services Examinations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Babu Sebastian, former VC - MG University in extending all support to this endeavour. Finally I also extend my thanks to thank Ms. Shilpa Sasidharan and Mr. Shahul Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

We welcome your valuable comments so that further improvement may be made in the forthcoming material. We look forward to feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve and add value for students. Every care has been taken to avoid typing errors and if any reader comes across any such error, the authors shall feel obliged if they are informed at their Email ID.



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Reaping the demographic dividend

India needs to invest in quality school and higher education as well as healthcare



UDAY BALAKRISHNAN

The UN report, World Population Prospects 2022, forecasts that the world's population will touch eight billion this year and rise to 9.8 billion in 2050. What is of immediate interest to India is that its population will surpass China's by 2023 and continue to surge.

A long-time critic of China's population policy and author of *Big Country with An Empty Nest*, Yi Fuxian, believes that without its one child policy, China's population, too, would have naturally risen and peaked at 1.6 billion in 2040, allowing the world's second-largest economy to enjoy a much longer "demographic dividend." Instead, China is enduring an ongoing population implosion, which by 2050, will leave it with only 1.3 billion people, of whom 500 million will be past the age of 60. India's population, by contrast, would have peaked at 1.7 billion, of whom only 330 million will be 60 years or older.

Simply put, India is getting a demographic dividend that will last nearly 30 years. How it handles this windfall will determine if it will rise to the top of the economic league table by the end of this century or continue to eddy at lower middle-income levels. A sceptical world is watching.

India's potential workforce

Most optimistic about India's future rise are major consulting firms. Deloitte's *Deloitte Insights* (September 2017) expects "India's potential workforce to rise from 885 million to 1.08 billion people over the next two decades from today", and "remain above a billion people for half a century," betting that "these new workers will be much better trained and educated," than their existing counterparts. It contends that "the next 50 years will, therefore, be an Indian summer that redraws the face of global economic power."

McKinsey & Company's report, 'India at Turning Point' (August 2020), believes the "trends such as digitisation and automation, shifting



AP/PTI

supply chains, urbanisation, rising incomes and demographic shifts, and a greater focus on sustainability, health, and safety are accelerating" to "create \$2.5 trillion of economic value in 2030 and support 112 million jobs, or about 30% of the non-farm workforce in 2030."

The Economist is optimistic about India's future too. In its May 14, 2022 issue, it had this to say about India, "As the pandemic recedes, four pillars are clearly visible that will support growth in the next decade; the forging of a single national market, an expansion of industry owing to the renewable-energy shift and a move in supply chains away from China, continued pre-eminence in IT, and a high-tech welfare safety-net for the hundreds of millions left behind by all this." But not all are so bullish about India.

The Financial Times in an article, 'Demographics: Indian workers are not ready to seize the baton', believes that India's bad infrastructure and poorly skilled workforce will impede its growth.

RAND Corporation's report, 'China and India, 2025, A Comparative Assessment,' commissioned by the U.S. Secretary of Defense endorses

this view as does the 2018 report, 'An Indian Economic Strategy to 2035', released by the Australian government and another on India from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) titled, 'Going for Growth'. Their pessimism may be overstated and even outdated today. It is possible that McKinsey & Company and Deloitte are seeing something many others are missing out on.

'India: an open society'

There is so much going on for India today compared to China, the only country it can be reasonably compared to. It is still a young country and in a much better position to transform itself compared to China of the 1970s. It is still an open society where mass protest matters and produces results. Indians have not been traumatised as Chinese were at the time of Mao Zedong's death and in the aftermath of two events he set off and which roiled China for decades – The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

The IT technologies now available in India, and most importantly the Internet they run on have matured exponentially. Many things right

from video conferencing to instantaneous payments and satellite imaging are getting better and cheaper by the day.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, we know these can revolutionise learning and transform Indian society at an astonishingly low cost, unimaginable through much of China's economic liberalisation.

Creaky and inadequate as they are, India's administrative systems manage to deliver and its infrastructure is in far better shape today than it was for China at the start of its reforms. Nor did India impose the equivalent of China's one child policy that has seen China suffer the consequences of a prematurely ageing society with a skewed gender ratio.

Deep divide in China

India does not have a Hukou system which in China tethers rural folk to rural parts creating a deep divide between a small and prosperous urban China and a much larger, very deprived rural China about which the world knows so little about.

As Scott Rozelle at Stanford University's Centre on China's Economy and Institutions, writes in his book co-authored with Natalie Hell, *Invisible China - How the Urban Rural Divide Threatens China's Rise*, "Thanks to the Hukou system disincentivising migration to urban areas, only about 36% of China's overall population is urban and fully 64% is rural (some 800 to 900 million people)." The huge divide between urban and rural China is, according to Rozelle, almost unbridgeable.

To wring the best out of its demographic dividend, India needs to invest massively in quality school and higher education as well as healthcare – sectors it has neglected for decades – across India on an unprecedented scale, literally in trillions of rupees between now and 2050 when it would have reached the apogee of its population growth.

India must seize the moment and not be incremental in its approach. Given the will it can initiate and see through a transformation that will stun the world, even more than China's has so far.

Uday Balakrishnan teaches Public Policy and Contemporary history at The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. Views expressed are personal

India to host UNSC meet on counterterrorism

Meeting in October to bring representatives of 15 countries, including China and Russia, for talks on emerging threats

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

In a first, India will host diplomats and officials from all 15 countries of the United Nations Security Council, including China, Russia and the U.S., for a special meeting on terrorism, in Delhi and Mumbai in October.

The meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which India is chairing for 2022 as a member of the UNSC, will focus particularly on challenges such as terrorism financing, cyber-threats and the use of drones, said officials.

New Delhi is expected to highlight cross-border threats from Pakistan and Afghanistan at the meeting, which will come two months before India completes its tenure as an elected member of the UNSC (2021-22). In ad-

dition, India has been pushing for the UN members to adopt a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (first proposed in 1996), which is likely to be raised during the meeting.

“The event will showcase India’s role as a victim of terrorism as well as a country at the forefront of global counter-terrorism efforts,” said an official involved in the planning.

New challenges

Sources said that while terrorism financing was now recognised and dealt with through mechanisms such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), it was necessary to build templates and “codes of conduct” for newer threats, including financing through cryptocurrency and the use of drones for terror



Making a point: S. Jaishankar chairing the UNSC meeting on counterterrorism in August 2021 in New York. ■PTI

attacks. They said the CTC meeting in India could also pave the way for a possible visit to New York by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December, when India will be the President of the UNSC for the entire month.

In August 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Modi had chaired a UNSC special session on Enhancing Maritime Security virtually, in which several leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, had attend-

ed. Officials said India’s UN Mission, where Permanent Representative Ruchira Khamboj presented her credentials on Tuesday, would be working on ensuring maximum participation at the event, in case the Prime Minister decides to travel.

An earlier plan to travel to Washington in December for the Democracy Summit to be convened by U.S. President Joe Biden may be put off, as the summit is likely to be postponed.

Announcing the visit of the delegates, the United Nations said that the special meeting had been convened on October 29 in India, in view of “the increasing threat posed by the misuse of new and emerging technologies”. “The special meeting will specifically focus on three significant areas

where emerging technologies are experiencing rapid development, growing use by Member States (including for security and counter-terrorism purposes), and increasing threat of abuse for terrorism purposes, namely (a) the Internet and social media, (b) terrorism financing, and (c) unmanned aerial systems,” the UN said.

Officials told *The Hindu* that the details of the visit were still being finalised, including whether the visiting delegates would include Permanent Representatives or Ministers at the respective missions of the member states. The meeting, which is normally held in New York, had been discussed and planned since early this year, said sources, as part of the events to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence.

CJI's recommendation on successor sought

Justice U.U. Lalit is next in line

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Wednesday received a communication from Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju seeking his recommendation on the appointment of the next top judge.

Chief Justice Ramana is retiring on August 26, 2022.

It is now left to Chief Justice Ramana to give the Law Minister his recommendation on his successor. Justice U.U. Lalit is the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court now. Justice Lalit is in line to be appointed the 49th CJI as per the seniority norm.

The 'Memorandum of Procedure of Appointment of Supreme Court Judges' says "appointment to the office of the Chief Justice of India should be of the senior-most Judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office".

The process, according to

the Memorandum, begins with the Union Law Minister seeking the recommendation of the outgoing CJI about the next appointment.

The Minister has to seek the CJI's recommendation "at the appropriate time". The Memorandum does not elaborate or specify a timeline. However, if past changes of guard at the top judge post were to be seen, the Law Minister had sought the recommendation and the outgoing CJI had sent his reply with a month to spare for the latter's retirement day.

The Memorandum says that "after receipt of the recommendation of the Chief Justice of India, the Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs will put up the recommendation to the Prime Minister who will advise the President in the matter of appointment".

Suresh Patel is new CVC, two commissioners take charge

Murmu administers oath; Modi, Venkaiah present

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Vigilance Commissioner Suresh N. Patel was sworn in as the Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Wednesday.

Mr. Patel was officiating as the Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) since June this year after Sanjay Kothari, former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, completed his term.

“At a ceremony held today at 10:00 hrs at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Shri Suresh N Patel, was sworn in as the Central Vigilance Commissioner. He made and subscribed the oath of his office before the President,” a communique issued by the



CVC Suresh N. Patel at the Rashtrapati Bhavan ■ PTI

Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

The ceremony was also attended by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge.

Later in the day, Mr. Patel administered the oath of of-

fice to former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Arvind Kumar and ex-IAS officer Praveen Kumar Srivastava as the vigilance commissioners.

With these appointments, the Central Vigilance Commission is in its full strength now.

The Commission is headed by a central vigilance commissioner and it can have two Vigilance Commissioners.

Mr Patel, former managing director and chief executive officer of Andhra Bank, was in April 2020 appointed as the vigilance commissioner. Mr Patel's elevation was approved by a selection panel headed by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition (LoP).

SC calls for a panel to look into freebies issue

Court asks parties for inputs to set up a specialised body

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

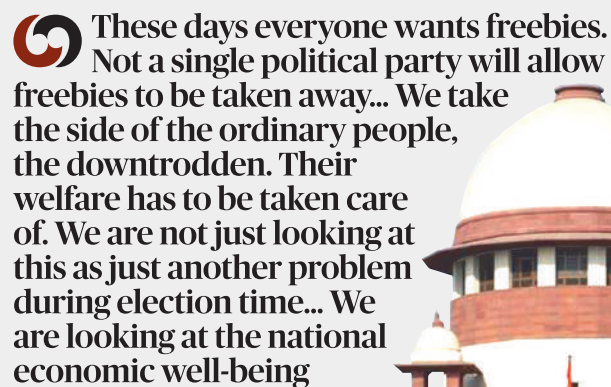
The Supreme Court on Wednesday said Parliament may not be able to effectively debate the issue of doing away with “irrational freebies” offered to voters during elections, saying the “reality” is that not a single political party wants to take away freebies.

The court suggested setting up a specialised body composed of persons who can “dispassionately” examine the problem.

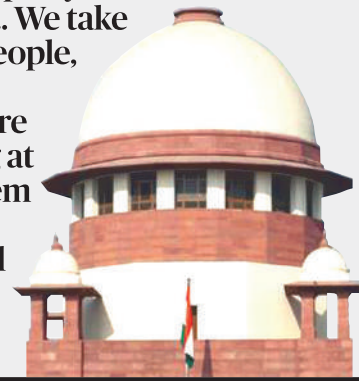
The observations from a Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana came even as the Centre said these freebies were paving the way for an “economic disaster” besides “distorting the informed decision of voters”.

The Centre, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, said it “substantially and in principle” supported doing away with the practice of promising freebies to voters.

The court directed the parties to make “suggestions for the composition of a body”. It proposed that this bo-

**These days everyone wants freebies. Not a single political party will allow freebies to be taken away... We take the side of the ordinary people, the downtrodden. Their welfare has to be taken care of. We are not just looking at this as just another problem during election time... We are looking at the national economic well-being**

N.V. RAMANA
Chief Justice of India



dy could examine ways to resolve the issue of freebies and file a report before the Centre or the Election Commission of India (ECI). The court said once the parties come up with suggestions on the composition of such a body in a week, it would pass orders.

Mr. Mehta said the court should allow the ECI to “apply its mind” to the problem.

‘Keep ECI away’

But senior advocate Kapil Sibal said the ECI should be “kept away” from the discussion on freebies. The issue was political and economic in nature and did not just

concern elections, he said. “The Parliament will have to debate,” Mr. Sibal said.

“Mr. Sibal, do you think there will be a debate in Parliament? These days everyone wants freebies. Not a single political party will allow freebies to be taken away... We take the side of the ordinary people, the downtrodden. Their welfare has to be taken care of. We are not just looking at this as just another problem during election time... We are looking at the national economic well-being,” Chief Justice Ramana said.

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SC calls for a panel to look into freebies issue

The court said the government as well as organisations such as the Niti Aayog, the Finance Commission of India, the Law Commission, the Reserve Bank of India, Opposition, etc., have to be involved in the process of brainstorming on the problem of freebies and come up with constructive conclusions on the issue.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, for petitioner Ashwini Upadhyay, said political parties and those in power in States riddled by debts should first come out in public about where they would source the money for paying for the largesse. “It needs to be revealed from whose pockets these freebies are paid for,” Mr. Singh submit-

ted. “A poor person feels that what is put in his left pocket would be taken out of his right pocket in a few years,” Mr. Mehta joined in.

Chief Justice Ramana said ordinary citizens pay taxes on the belief that their money would be used for progress. “State benefits should not just reach the rich. The poor are also entitled to benefits,” the CJI said.

Mr. Singh suggested that ECI could prepare a “model manifesto” to control freebies. Chief Justice Ramana retorted that if the ECI had taken up the issue, the court would not have had to intervene now. The court said its judgments against violence during elections continued to be ignored.

Trade worries

The burgeoning trade deficit is set to swell the current account deficit

July's provisional trade data should trigger early warning signals among policymakers, as the first year-on-year contraction in exports in 17 months, albeit marginal, and a 44% jump in imports, sharply widened the trade deficit to a third successive monthly record. The export performance is of concern, reflecting a slowdown in overseas demand for Indian merchandise, the competitive advantage gained by the rupee's sizeable depreciation against the U.S. dollar notwithstanding. While the Commerce Ministry has sought to explain away the 0.8% slide in last month's exports as largely being a result of inflation-control curbs, the Ministry's preliminary disaggregated data suggest several key sectors including engineering goods, gems and jewellery, garments and yarn and textiles, and drugs and pharmaceuticals, which were mostly outside the purview of those measures, also suffered contractions. And viewed on a sequential basis, the slide in exports from June's level is a disconcerting 12.2%. Engineering goods, which at more than 26% represented the largest share of merchandise shipped overseas in July, contracted 2.5% from a year earlier and also shrank 2.9% sequentially. Even granting that the Government's introduction in late May of a stiff export tax on a range of steel products, with a view to boosting their domestic availability and cooling price gains, was likely to have constrained exports of this segment of engineering goods, the contraction in the broad category points to a clear slowdown in demand in the advanced economies.

The latest S&P Global PMI data from the U.S. and the eurozone for economic activity in July is also far from reassuring. As per the PMI data, output across Europe's major economies sharing the euro as common currency shrank for the first time since February 2021 as a worsening manufacturing downturn combined with a slowdown in the service sector to drag the composite index into contraction territory. The U.S. economy, which has now contracted for two successive quarters putting it on the edge of a recession, saw manufacturing PMI post its lowest reading in two years as output and new orders declined in July. Given that the U.S. and the eurozone combined consumed almost a third of India's goods exports in the last fiscal year, the prospect of July's export slowdown deepening as demand in these markets weakens appears increasingly more likely. Imports continued to expand at a robust clip, driven largely by the expanding domestic demand for essentials including crude oil, coal, edible oils and electronic items. Coal and coke alone exceeded \$5.1 billion. The augury from the trade data is that the external sector faces increasing vulnerability as the burgeoning trade deficit is set to swell the current account deficit, adding pressure on the rupee at a time when portfolio investments from overseas have been negative, and foreign direct investment has been significantly weaker.

‘Services growth slides to 4-month low’

Business sentiment worsens with only 5% firms expecting growth a year from now, PMI survey shows

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India’s services sector growth hit a four-month low as demand weakened amid inflation pressures, as per the S&P Global India Services Purchase Managers’ Index (PMI) which moderated to 55.5 in July from an 11-year high of 59.2 in June. A reading of 50 on the PMI indicates no change in business activity levels.

While the domestic market remained the key source of sales growth, international demand for Indian services worsened further, S&P Global said, with new global orders seeing the sharpest drop in six months.

‘Inflation still a concern’
Input cost inflation remained a concern for busi-



Gathering clouds: International demand worsened with new global orders seeing the sharpest drop in six months. ■KSL

nesses, rising sharply even though at the slowest pace since February, as respondents for the survey-based index reported higher expenses on food, fuel, materials, staff, retail and transportation as the key sources

of inflationary pressures.

Firms continued to raise prices to pass on these costs to customers, even though the output charge inflation came off a five-year high in June. “The latest rise was solid and the seventeenth in

successive months,” S&P Global said.

While job creation was negligible in services sectors across India, it was the second month in a row that new jobs were reported after a decline in employment numbers in May.

“The rate of job creation was fractional and broadly similar to June. The vast majority of firms left payroll numbers unchanged amid a lack of need to raise workforces,” S&P Global noted.

While sales growth in July was dampened by fierce competition and unfavourable weather, overall business sentiment tanked further, with only 5% of companies forecasting output growth in the year ahead, compared with 9% in June. A majority 94% of firms predicted no

change in business activity from current levels.

‘Loss in momentum’

“In line with concerns that economic growth has weakened as we enter the second fiscal quarter, service providers signalled subdued confidence towards the medium-term business outlook,” said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, who flagged ‘a noticeable loss of momentum for the Indian service economy’ in July.

“Demand was somewhat curtailed by competitive pressures, elevated inflation and unfavourable weather. Both output and sales increased at the weakest rates for four months,” Ms. De Lima observed.

Public assets sale and the concern of 'fiduciary duty'

The Air India asset sale sets a dangerous precedent as it could result in liabilities being left on citizens



PUHAZH GANDHI P.

The sale of the loss-making national carrier Air India to the Tata Group is a move that evoked a mixed response. While some hailed it on the assumption that it would no longer spell a further loss to the exchequer, its opponents felt that a national asset was being sold at a throwaway price without transparency by the Union government.

On October 8, 2021, the Union government announced that Tata Sons was the winner of the bid for the airline for a consideration of ₹18,000 crore; the Tatas would retain ₹15,300 crore of Air India's debt and pay ₹2,700 crore in cash to the Government. The seller, the Government of India, would retain a liability of ₹46,262 crore that was transferred to a special purpose vehicle, the Air India Asset Holding Ltd (AIAHL) – thereby passing on the liability to individual taxpayer citizens. Thus, what was technically sold was just aircraft routes/landing rights and some core assets of Air India, and not Air India *per se*.

The sale of an enterprise is different from the sale of its assets (otherwise known as 'asset sale'), where in order to unlock the value of assets, liabilities are retained by the seller either by himself or through a special purpose vehicle, and assets are sold for a competitive price, as otherwise, the liabilities will surpass the value of the assets, rendering the enterprise value to negative. This is the norm in many corporate transactions.

It appears that this is the logic that was the driving force behind the Air India sale, where some assets (aircraft and a 50% stake in an airport services division) were sold to the Tatas and a major portion of the liabilities retained by the Union government through the AIAHL.

Asset sale, some differences

While an asset sale is normal in a corporate private transaction, the Government needs to exercise caution when selling a national asset to a private player. In a private asset sale, there are independent checks and balances, such as regulatory approvals, and the consent of the secured creditors (mostly banks) who will give their consent to park the liability only when they are satisfied that the promoters or the shareholders of the private enterprise would be able to satisfy the liabilities either from the proceeds of the sale or otherwise.

In a typical asset sale by the Government, these approvals are a mere formality. When the debt is assumed by the sovereign government, no banks that are directly or indirectly controlled by the government can conduct due diligence independently on the nature of the sale and report fairly on whether the proceeds of sale are sufficient to satisfy the debt because the government has given an undertaking to repay the debt or the government may even force banks into a settlement with lesser repayment or even a write-off. Thus, it is citizens who will end up repaying the debts of Air India.

It is prudent to extend the doctrine of 'public trust' to the management of public sector enterprises by the government. There is fiduciary duty cast upon the government to act fairly and in a transparent manner while dealing



RAMESH SHARMA

in public assets. Unlike a private asset sale, a government selling public assets and assuming the liabilities without proper planning will impose an enormous debt burden on citizens.

The Air India asset sale needs scrutiny in light of the Government's new National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), where public assets will be monetised either as lease or outright sale. Air India's asset sale and retention of liabilities sets a dangerous precedent as it could result in the selling of public assets to government faithfuls and leaving the liabilities on citizens.

The privatisation of loss-making public sector enterprises may prevent the state from incurring further losses. However, unless the sale proceeds are substantial, genuine and transparent, a crisis of legitimacy may arise.

Electoral bonds

One has the example of the anonymous electoral bonds scheme which taps corporate funding to help any political party and where the details are known only to the ruling party, which could fuel mistrust of such asset sales. A Right to Information filing by the Association for Democratic Reforms showed that with the State Bank of India as the sole authorised dealer of electoral bonds, out of ₹3,429 crore of the total value of electoral bonds generated by the bank

(FY19-20), the ruling party at the Centre alone devoured a whopping ₹2,606 crore, or 76% of the total bonds issued so far. This is also the period which saw instances of some major privatisation of public sector enterprises.

The recent award of a contract worth ₹1,126 crore to a Chinese firm (Shanghai Tunnel Engineering Co. Ltd.) to construct an underground rail stretch in Delhi and a contract worth ₹170 crore to another Chinese firm, Taizhong Hong Kong International Ltd., for the supply of wheels to Vande Bharat trains cannot be seen in isolation. It is important to remember that China is an aggressor at the Line of Actual Control. Here, the role of discreet political funding through anonymous electoral bonds needs to be assessed more closely.

Consult States

It is vital to recognise the role of States in establishing a public asset such as Air India. They have actively participated in the growth of the airline in the form of land and other infrastructure to its offices. States were not consulted in the whole process which is a breach of the spirit of 'cooperative federalism'.

According to Article 1 of the Constitution, India is a Union of States, i.e., the idea of India as a Union lies with the States, which are the owners of land and responsible for the maintenance of other infrastructure. Hence, any unilateral sale of assets by the Union without consulting States would only deepen the mistrust between the Union and the States.

India follows a mixed economy model, where the state negotiates a free market capitalist economy with social welfare principles. The economists, Andrew Glyn, the

author of *Capitalism Unleashed* and John Maynard Keynes, the propounder of 'Keynesian economics' argue that 'unleashed' capitalism leads to widening inequality, diminishing social welfare, lowering demand, and thus slower economic progress. The devastating effect of the 1930s Great Depression is a case in hand. Thus, Keynes, while recognising a profit-driven market place, advocated social welfare policy interventions such as social uplift, full employment, to 'leash' capitalism, and public sector enterprises (with their social obligation) play a constructive role in achieving it.

In a mixed economy, private participation is encouraged in areas where government finds it difficult to perform, without making compromises on the social obligation of the state which is as important as a commercial viability. The role Air India played in the repatriation of Indians stranded abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, its evacuation flights during wars and connecting remote areas to the mainland are some examples of social intervention that have to be kept in mind. By divesting the assets of Air India, the Government has stripped the assets and nationalised the debts to be serviced by citizens. If this logic and process is extended to the proposed National Monetisation Pipeline with discreet electoral bonds and without consulting States, no privatisation exercise by the Union will ever have any legitimacy.

Puhazh Gandhi P. is an international trade and investment attorney. He is also the State Joint Secretary, Non-Resident Indian affairs, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and Executive Coordinator, Dravidian Professionals Forum

LS passes Bill to set up Gati Shakti University

First varsity after roll-out of NEP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which seeks to establish the Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya as a Central University, changing the form of the National Rail and Transportation University which is currently a deemed to be institution in Vadodara. The Bill also seeks to expand the scope of the deemed university from beyond the railways to cover the entire transport sector to support the ambitious growth and modernisation in the field.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya would be a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional institute, and the first Cen-

tral university after the roll-out of the National Education Policy.

“The plan is to unify different departments to create a new infrastructure where various transport sector elements – railways, road, waterways, aviation and port along with information and technology – will coordinate with each other on the platform of Gati Shakti Mission,” Mr. Pradhan said. The proposed global standard institute aimed at not producing job-seekers but job-creators, he added.

The establishment of the Vishwavidyalaya would address the need of talent in the strategically important and expanding transportation sector and meet the demand for trained talent to fuel the growth and expansion of the sector, he said.

Centre raises fair prices for sugarcane harvest

It is too little, say farmers' organisations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, at its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Wednesday, has approved Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for sugar season 2022-23 (October - September) at ₹305 per quintal.

The amount is for sugarcane with a basic sugar recovery rate of 10.25%. The Centre has also announced a premium of ₹3.05 per quintal for each 0.1% increase in recovery of sugar over and above 10.25% and reduction in FRP by ₹3.05 per quintal for every 0.1% decrease in recovery.

The FRP for last season was ₹290 per quintal with a basic recovery rate of 10%. While the Centre claimed the increase will protect the interest of sugarcane farmers, the farmers' organisations said the FRP is too low when compared to the increase in input cost and the increase of 0.25% in recovery rate is a blow to them. The Centre has also decided that there shall not be any deduction in case of sugar mills where recovery is below 9.5%.

General secretary of Maharashtra State unit of All India Kisan Sabha Ajit Nawale said the cost of production has surged due to increase in fuel and fertilizer price.

Cabinet nod for climate pledges

However, India's updated NDC does not include all the promises made at COP26

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

India ratified pledges made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Glasgow last November to accelerate the country's reliance on renewable energy to power the economy and be effectively free from use of fossil fuels by 2070. However, the approved pledges were fewer than those Mr. Modi committed to.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Mr. Modi, on Wednesday approved an update to India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Mr. Modi had laid out five commitments, or *Panchamrit*, as the government references it, namely: India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW (gigawatt) by 2030; will meet 50% of its energy requirements from "renewable energy" by 2030; will reduce the total projected carbon emissions



Net zero: India aims at putting an end to dependence on fossil fuels by 2070. ■PTI

by one billion tonnes from now till 2030; will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by more than 45%; and will achieve the target of "net zero" by the year 2070, when there will be no net carbon dioxide emitted from energy sources. A press statement, following the Cabinet approval, only mentions two of these promises, namely that India is committed to reduce emissions intensity of its

GDP by 45% by 2030, from the 2005 level and achieving 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

Independent experts said that while the NDCs reflected India's commitment to sustainable development they were a climbdown from the ambition India had expressed at Glasgow.

"India's updated NDC

does not include all the promises made at COP26 in Glasgow," Vibhuti Garg, Energy Economist & India Lead, Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said in a statement.

Madhura Joshi, Senior Associate, India Energy Transition Lead, E3G, said: "A reiteration of the renewables focus would have provided a fresh impetus for the renewables sector."

‘Hope govt. incorporates all suggestions in new Bill’

100 changes proposed: panel member

A. M. JIGEESH

NEW DELHI

Chairman of the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Personal Data Protection Bill and senior BJP MP P.P. Chaudhary welcomed the Centre’s decision to withdraw the Bill on Wednesday.

Mr. Chaudhary hoped that the fresh Bill would incorporate all the amendments and recommendations of the panel.

“All the recommendations are valuable for the Bill and for the government,” he said.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Chaudhary said initially, the Justice Srikrishna Committee recommended a draft Bill and a group of secretaries looked into it and referred it to the Union Cabinet. “There are about 100 clauses in the Bill. The com-

mittee held 77 meetings and considered the Bill clause by clause. We made about 93 recommendations and suggested about 100 amendments,” Mr. Chaudhary said.

He said it was very difficult for the government to introduce the Bill with so many amendments.

“We suggested amendments to almost every clause. If the government wants to bring a composite Bill by including all our amendments, then all those amendments should be introduced on the floor of the House. So I think the government has taken a perfect and right decision by withdrawing the Bill and bringing a fresh Bill by incorporating all the recommendations of the committee in the new Bill. It will be a proper Bill,” he said.

Union govt. rolls back Data Protection Bill

“A new draft which will be in sync with the principles of privacy and Supreme Court guidelines will be prepared rapidly,” Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who moved for the withdrawal of the Bill in the House, told *The Hindu*. He said that the new Bill would fit into the comprehensive legal framework with reference to the suggestions made by the Joint Committee of Parliament (JCP).

Stating the reasons for the withdrawal, the government said “The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, was deliberated in great detail by the JCP. Eighty-one amendments were proposed and 12 recommendations were made towards the comprehensive legal framework on digital ecosystem. Considering the report of the JCP, a comprehensive legal framework is being worked upon. Hence, it is proposed to withdraw The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, and present a new Bill that fits into the comprehensive legal framework.”

The JCP on the Personal Data Protection Bill had sub-

mitted a 542-page report with 93 recommendations and 81 amendments to the Bill in December 2021. The panel, headed by BJP MP P.P. Chaudhary, had recommended 97 corrections and improvements to the Bill.

The key discussions in the panel were based on whether the proposed Data Protection Authority should get constitutional status and whether the States should have their own Data Protection Authorities. The Opposition had alleged that the penalty provisions on fiduciaries if they breach or process data in an unauthorised manner were watered down despite their objections.

On the decision of the Centre to withdraw the Bill, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said there was pressure from the U.S. against the report of the JCP. “Both Ashwini Vaishnaw and Rajeev Chandrasekhar [the Ministers for Telecommunications and IT] were members of the Joint Committee. They are now Ministers. Perhaps their views have changed,” Mr. Ramesh, who was also a member of the panel, said.

U.S., Indonesia hold joint military drills amid China concerns

Over 5,000 soldiers participate, which will last till Aug. 14

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JAKARTA

The United States and Indonesian militaries began annual joint combat exercises Wednesday on Indonesia's Sumatra island, joined for the first time by participants from other partner nations, signalling stronger ties amid growing maritime activity by China in the Indo-Pacific region.

More than 5,000 soldiers from the U.S., Indonesia, Australia, Japan and Singapore were participating in this year's exercises, making them the largest since the drills were established in

2009. The exercises are designed to strengthen interoperability, capability, trust and cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific, the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta said in a statement.

"It's a symbol of the U.S.-Indonesia bond and the growing relationship between land forces in this consequential region," Gen. Charles Flynn, Commanding General of U.S. Army Pacific, said in the statement. "Because land forces are the glue that binds the region's security architecture together."

Gen. Flynn and Indone-

sia's Military Chief Gen. Andika Perkasa opened the joint drills with a ceremony on Wednesday morning in Baturaja, a coastal town in South Sumatra province. The exercises will last until August 14, encompassing Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine drills.

The planned two-week drills opened after China's Defence Ministry said on Tuesday night it would conduct a series of targeted military operations to "safeguard national sovereignty" in response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to self-governed Taiwan.

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| B | Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues; |
| C | Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country; |
| D | Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country; |
| E | History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, |
| F | Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society |
| G | Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India; |
| H | Effects of globalization on Indian society; |
| I | Role of women and women's organization; |
| J | Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism |
| K | Salient features of world's physical geography; |
| L | Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes; |
| M | Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc. |
| N | Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent); |
| O | Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India); |
| P | Population and associated issues; |
| Q | Urbanization, their problems and their remedies |
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| General Studies Paper II | |
| A | India and its neighbourhood- relations; |
| B | Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate; |
| C | Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests; |
| D | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests. |
| E | Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure; |
| F | Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries; |
| G | Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it; |
| H | Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these; |
| I | Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments; |

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| J | Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions; |
| K | Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies; |
| L | Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies; |
| M | Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections; |
| N | Salient features of the Representation of People's Act; |
| O | Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; |
| P | Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures; |
| Q | Issues relating to poverty and hunger, |
| R | Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes; |
| S | Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources; |
| T | Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health |
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| D | Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting; |
| E | Land reforms in India |
| F | Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems; |
| G | Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; |
| H | e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing. |
| I | Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; |
| J | Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management; |
| K | Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices |
| L | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology; |
| M | Indigenization of technology and developing new technology; |
| N | Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life; |
| O | Issues relating to intellectual property rights |
| P | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment |
| Q | Disaster and disaster management |
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| S | Money-laundering and its prevention; |

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| T | Various forces and their mandate; |
| U | Security challenges and their management in border areas; |
| V | Linkages of organized crime with terrorism; |
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| X | Linkages between development and spread of extremism. |
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| B | Dimensions of ethics; |
| C | Ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; |
| D | Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values. |
| E | Attitude: Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour; |
| F | Moral and political attitudes; |
| G | Social influence and persuasion. |
| H | Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service , integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections. |
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| J | Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world. |
| K | Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; |
| L | Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; |
| M | Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as |
| N | sources of ethical guidance; |
| O | Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; |
| P | Corporate governance. |
| Q | Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; |
| R | Philosophical basis of governance and probity; |
| S | Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption. |
| T | Case Studies on above issues. |