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**VEDHIK**  
**DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS**

20 - DEC - 2022

## FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Vedhik - Daily News Analysis (DNA)\_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Vedhik - Daily News Analysis (DNA)\_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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# A planet in crisis

## Tangible outcomes from biological diversity convention are far away

**A** month after the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) in Egypt, diplomatic retinue went into a contentious huddle again to save the planet – in Montreal, Canada, this time, and as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). While both these conferences can trace their origins to the Rio summit of 1992, the CBD does not get anywhere near the media attention COP commands. There are no world leaders and heads of state making grandiloquent commitments because the CBD largely continues to be framed as an ‘environmentalist’ concern, much like what COP used to be, until the forces of capitalism managed to reimagine the idea of a planet being inexorably slow-cooked in greenhouse gases to one that may yet be saved by renewable energy sources – and at the very least – make some entrepreneurs rich.

Unlike cyclones and melting glaciers that have become visual aids to bring home the climate crisis wrought by invisible gases, biodiversity loss continues to be largely invisible despite its victims being extremely visible. Based on current trends, the UN reckons, an estimated 34,000 plant and 5,200 animal species, including one in eight of the world’s bird species, face extinction. About 30% of breeds of main farm animal species are currently at high risk of extinction. Forests are home to much of the known terrestrial biodiversity, but about 45% of the earth’s original forests are gone, cleared mostly during the past century. Yet, because much of this extinction is not finely accounted for as the rise in per capita carbon emissions or temperature swings, it fails to evoke the urgency it deserves. In this light, India’s stance, i.e., of not wanting hard targets on proposals such as reducing the use of pesticides, given that their effects on impacting biodiversity are documented, and conserving 30% of land and sea, seems anachronistic particularly when it sees itself as a champion of conservation and living in harmony with nature. While India, adopting a negotiating tack from climate conferences, has argued that different nations have differing levels of responsibility towards biodiversity conservation (which requires richer nations to be more generous funders of global conservation efforts), it is well known that such demands are a dead end unless countries agree to definite targets. What cannot be measured, as the adage goes, cannot be understood or addressed. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the CBD, has described the negotiations as one that should result in a “Paris moment for nature”; while this was not quite what happened, countries have agreed on preparing concrete road maps by 2024 and the richer ones, committing \$30 billion an annum by 2030. But seeing tangible outcomes is a long time away.

# COP-15 summit adopts historic biodiversity deal

Kunming-Montreal Agreement is aimed at saving the lands, oceans and species from pollution, degradation and climate change, and is being compared to the landmark Paris Agreement

**Press Trust of India**  
MONTREAL

**A**fter four years of fractious talks, nearly 200 countries, including India, approved a historic Paris-style deal on Monday to protect and reverse dangerous loss to global biodiversity, following an intense final session of negotiations at the UN COP-15 summit here in Canada.

Amid applause, Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu, the president of the COP-15 biodiversity summit, which started on December 7, declared the Kunming-Montreal Agreement adopted.

The Chair manoeuvred to ignore Congo's last-minute refusal, demanding greater funding for developing countries.

## 'Peace pact with nature'

The Kunming-Montreal pact is hailed as a landmark to protect biodiversity. Here are a few points:

### '30 by 30'

The cornerstone of the agreement is the so-called 30 by 30 goal — a pledge to protect 30% of the world's land and seas by 2030

### Indigenous rights

Indigenous rights were addressed throughout the text, including in areas covered by the 30 by 30 pledge — safeguarding Indigenous peoples' right to remain stewards of land they use and ensuring they are not subject to mass evictions

### Finance

The text approves the objective for rich countries to provide "at least \$20 billion per year by 2025, and ... at least \$30 billion per year by 2030", approximately double and then triple the current international aid for biodiversity. Also it creates a "trust fund" within an existing financial mechanism called the Global Environment Facility, as a stepping stone to a new fund in the future



**Adopted:** China's Minister Huang Runqiu passes the deal in Montreal on Monday. REUTERS

The Chinese-brokered deal is aimed at saving the lands, oceans and species from pollution, degradation and climate change. Monitored wildlife populations have seen a devastating 69% drop on average since 1970, according to the Living Planet Report

(LPR) 2022 of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav, who was part of negotiations, told *The Hindu* that broadly the agreement was "positive" as far as India was concerned. On Saturday, he laid out India's position

that goals and targets set in the Global Biodiversity Framework ought to be ambitious, as well as "realistic and practical".

(With inputs from Jacob Koshy)

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## Biodiversity deal adopted at COP-15

Highlighting a principle enshrined in climate change negotiations that countries historically responsible for global warming must pay for remedial measures more than developing countries, he said that the same ought to be applied with respect to conservation of biodiversity too as climate change also had an impact on biodiversity.

One of the proposed recommendations is reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half by 2030.

One of the most contentious issues in the negotiations was the finance package to support conservation efforts globally.

The deal commits to progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources by 2030, mobilising at least \$200 billion a year. This represents roughly a doubling from a 2020 baseline.

A major achievement is the commitment to \$20 billion in international finance flows by 2025 and \$30 billion by 2030.

The accord's 23 targets include axing environmentally "destructive" farming subsidies, reducing risk from pesticides and tackling invasive species.

Last week, India said a numerical global target for pesticide reduction in agriculture sector was unnecessary and must be left for countries to decide. It said the sector in India, and other developing nations, was the source of "life, livelihoods, and culture for hundreds of millions," and support to it could not be targeted for elimination.

The deal is being compared by many to the landmark plan to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius under the Paris Agreement.

While environment groups welcomed the potentially transformative impacts the new agreement could have, many still feel that crucial details around finance and conservation are missing. "Agreeing on a shared global goal that will guide collective and immediate action to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 is an exceptional feat for those that have been negotiating the Global Biodiversity Framework, and a win for people and planet," said Marco Lambertini, Director-General, WWF International.

"It is the equivalent to 1.5 degrees Celsius in climate and vital to catalysing action toward a nature-positive world and holding everyone accountable," he added.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) welcomed the agreement reached at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to agree on a new plan to preserve and protect nature with the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). "This agreement means people around the world can hope for real progress to halt biodiversity loss and protect and restore our lands and seas in a way that safeguards our planet and respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities," said UN Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner.

# A role for India in a world wide web

A recent statement by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar that India can play a “stabilising” and “bridging” role, at a time when the world no longer offers an “optimistic picture”, is intriguing. He stated that India can contribute towards the “de-risking of the global economy” and in political terms, “in some way, help depolarise the world”.

He said, “I think those are really expectations that a lot of other countries, especially countries of the global south have of us. Obviously, we will try and do what we can, and we remain in touch with all the bottom countries of the world.” He added, “Countries wanted to talk to us, because there is a belief that we are in touch with key players [and] we can influence them, we can shape the thinking, we can contribute, we are prepared, sometimes to say things which many others cannot see, or have reached out to countries and leaders in a way may not be possible for everybody to do so.”

Mr. Jaishankar’s is an ambitious formulation expressed, wisely, in cautious terms. In 2012, when I wrote my book, *Pax Indica: India and the World in the 21st Century*, many immediately misconstrued the title phrase to mean world domination, as in the familiar “Pax Romana” or “Pax Britannica”. What I meant, however, was the critical role I believed India has to play in what has become a cooperative networked system in our multi-polar world. The idea of “Pax Indica”, to me, is not about India as a future “world leader” or even as “the next superpower”, a status assorted commentators claimed that it was heading irresistibly towards. Instead “Pax Indica”, in my conception, was about India’s role in shaping the emerging global “network” which would define international relations and world politics in the 21st century. I believe that the era of any country claiming or seeking to be a “world leader” is definitely over – and I hope Beijing is listening.

## An archaic notion

In any case, the very idea of “world leadership” is a curiously archaic notion; the very phrase is redolent of Kipling ballads and James Bondian adventures. What makes a country a world leader? Is it population, in which case India is on course to top the charts, overtaking China as the world’s most populous country next year? Is it military strength (there, India has the world’s fourth-strongest army) or nuclear capacity (India’s status having been made clear in 1998, and then formally recognised in the India-U.S. nuclear deal some years later)? Is it economic development? There, India has made extraordinary strides in recent years; it is already



**Shashi Tharoor**

is a third-term Lok Sabha MP (Congress) from Thiruvananthapuram, a former Under Secretary General of the United Nations, a former Minister of State for External Affairs and former Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. Among his 24 books are ‘Pax Indica: India and the World in the 21st Century’ and ‘The New World Disorder’ (co-authored with Samir Saran)

The evolution of a role for India, where it moves to exercising a vision of responsibility on the world stage, would be worth watching

the world’s third largest economy in PPP (purchasing-power parity) terms and continues to climb, though too many of our people continue to live destitute, amidst despair and disrepair. Or could it be a combination of all these, allied to something altogether more difficult to define – “soft power”? As Joseph Nye has argued in regard to the U.S., does not the power of attraction mean much more today than the force of arms or economic muscle in wielding influence in the world?

Much of the conventional analyses of any country’s stature in the world relies on the all-too-familiar economic and hard-power assumptions. But as India demonstrates daily, we are famously a land of paradoxes, and among those paradoxes is that so many speak about India as a great power of the 21st century when we are not yet able to feed, educate and employ all our people. So it is not economic growth, military strength or population numbers that I would underscore when I think of our nation’s potential role in the world of the 21st century. Rather, it is a transformation of the terms of global exchange and the way countries adapt to the new international, interlinked landscape that will shape their future role and direction. Far from evolving into a “world leader”, India, for instance, should become an active participant in a world that is no longer defined by parameters such as “superpowers” or “great powers” exercising “world leadership”.

## Foreign policy has much more to it

The old binaries of the Cold War era are no longer relevant. At the same time, the distinction between domestic and international is less and less meaningful in today’s world. Foreign policy is no longer just foreign: when we think of foreign policy, we must also think of its domestic implications. The ultimate purpose of any country’s foreign policy is to promote the security and well-being of its own citizens. We want a world that gives us the conditions of peace and security that will permit us to grow and flourish, safe from foreign depredations but open to external opportunities.

We are living in a world in which one defining paradigm for foreign policy is impossible. We cannot simply be non-aligned between two superpowers when one of them sits on our borders and nibbles at our territory. But nor can we afford to sacrifice our strategic autonomy in a quest for self-protection. We need to define a new role for ourselves that depends on our understanding of the way the world is.

My metaphor for today’s globalised world is that of the World Wide Web. In this increasingly networked world, we are going to have to work

through multiple networks, which will sometimes overlap with each other with common memberships, and sometimes be distinct. But they all serve our interests in different ways and for different purposes. Our External Affairs Minister meets annually with his Russian and Chinese counterparts in the trilateral RIC; he adds Brazil and South Africa in BRICS; subtracts both Russia and China in IBSA, for South-South co-operation; and retains China but excludes Russia in BASIC, for environmental negotiations. (And this is not merely because India’s name begins with that most useful element in any acronym, a vowel!)

## Another set of paradoxes

This kind of world-wide-web style networking reflects other paradoxes of our world. India belongs both to the non-aligned movement, which reflects its experience of colonialism, and the community of democracies, which reflects its 75 years of experience as a democracy alongside many of the countries it rails against in the non-aligned movement. India is a leading light of the global “trade union” of developing countries, the G-77 (Group of 77), which has some 120 countries, and also of the global macro-economic “management”, the G-20 (Group of 20 developed and developing countries whose presidency India has just assumed). India plays an influential role both in the United Nations, a universal organisation that has 193 member states, and in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) that has only its seven neighbours. We have the great ability to be in all these great institutional networks, pursuing different objectives with different partners, and in each finding a valid purpose that suits us. This is why I have long suggested that India has moved beyond non-alignment to what I called multi-alignment, though I must admit the phrase did not catch on when I first used it in 2009. (Now Mr. Jaishankar happily cites it, and was gracious enough to credit me for it when he first used it at the Raisina Dialogue.)

Today, India, and indeed most countries, can take our sovereignty for granted; we know no one would dare threaten it. Our strategic autonomy is a fact of life and no longer something that has to be fought for. We are now in a position to graduate from a focus limited to our own sovereign autonomy to exercising a vision of responsibility on the world stage, from a post-colonial concern with self-protection to a new role participating in the making of global rules and even playing a role in imposing them. This seems to be what Mr. Jaishankar was suggesting in his recent remarks, and the evolution of this role is well worth watching.

# LS passes Bill to extend ST status to Betta-Kuruba

## **The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Fourth Amendment) Bill, 2022 to include Betta-Kuruba on the Scheduled Tribes list of Karnataka as a synonym for the already categorised Kadu-Kuruba tribe in the State.

The Bill was passed through voice vote after a discussion during which most members, including MPs from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, while supporting the Amendment, insisted that the government consider bringing a comprehensive Bill to include all such communities left out of the list instead of bringing legislation one by one.

In response to the discussion, Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda said this point on bringing a comprehensive Bill had been raised time and again by members in the House but justified the move of separating them.

Mr. Munda said this process was testament to the

Narendra Modi-led government's commitment to provide enough time to discuss issues of communities. "We do not want to bring legislation in a way that will drown out the voices of these communities that in some cases number less than 10,000," he said, adding that because of this, the House was now giving due time to discuss issues pertaining to the smallest and most marginalised communities in the country.

Mr. Munda also hit out at the Congress for shedding "crocodile tears" about the welfare of tribespeople, noting that if the party truly cared about the welfare of STs, it would not have opposed President Droupadi Murmu's candidacy in the presidential elections.

Congress member Kodikkunil Suresh said the Centre was bringing Bills to include communities on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lists. "But it was not even raising the reservation quota for these communities proportionally," he said.



# The minimum tax on big businesses

Why have 136 countries and members of the EU agreed to implement a 15% tax rate on large multinational corporations? What are the particulars of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's global tax agreement? Will low tax jurisdictions concur with the plan?

## EXPLAINER

Prashanth Perumal

### The story so far:

Members of the European Union last week agreed in principle to implement a minimum tax of 15% on big businesses. Last year, 136 countries had agreed on a plan to redistribute tax rights across jurisdictions and enforce a minimum tax rate of 15% on large multinational corporations. It is estimated that the minimum tax rate would boost global tax revenues by \$150 billion annually.

### What is it?

EU members have agreed to implement a minimum tax rate of 15% on big businesses in accordance with Pillar 2 of the global tax agreement framed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) last year. Under the OECD's plan, governments will be equipped to impose additional taxes in case companies are found to be paying taxes that are considered too low. This is to ensure that big businesses with global operations do not benefit by domiciling themselves in tax havens in order to save on taxes. Pillar 1 of the OECD's tax plan, on the other hand, tries to address the question of taxing rights. Large multinational companies have traditionally paid taxes in their home countries even though they did most of their business in foreign countries. The OECD plan tries to give more taxing rights to the governments of countries where large businesses conduct a substantial amount of their business. As a result, large U.S. tech companies may have to pay more taxes to governments of developing countries.

### What is the need for a global minimum tax?

Corporate tax rates across the world have been dropping over the last few decades as a result of competition between governments to spur economic growth through greater private investments. Global corpo-



GETTY IMAGES

rate tax rates have fallen from over 40% in the 1980s to under 25% in 2020, thanks to global tax competition that was kick-started by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. The OECD's tax plan tries to put an end to this "race to the bottom" which has made it harder for governments to shore up the revenues required to fund their rising spending budgets. The minimum tax proposal is particularly relevant at a time when the fiscal state of governments across the world has deteriorated as seen in the worsening of public debt metrics.

### What lies ahead?

Some governments, particularly those of traditional tax havens, are likely to disagree and stall the implementation of the OECD's tax plan. High tax jurisdictions like the EU are more likely to fully adopt the

minimum tax plan as it saves them from having to compete against low tax jurisdictions. Low tax jurisdictions, on the other hand, are likely to resist the OECD's plan unless they are compensated sufficiently in other ways. It should be noted that, even within the EU, countries such as Poland have already tried to stall the adoption of the global minimum tax proposal citing various non-economic reasons. Since the OECD's plan essentially tries to form a global tax cartel, it will always face the risk of losing out to low-tax jurisdictions outside the cartel and cheating by members within the cartel. After all, countries both within and outside the cartel will have the incentive to boost investments and economic growth within their respective jurisdictions by offering lower tax rates to businesses. This is a structural problem that will persist as long as the global tax cartel continues to exist.

### What good will the OECD's tax plan do to the global economy?

Supporters of the OECD's tax plan believe that it will end the global "race to the bottom" and help governments collect the revenues required for social spending.

Many believe that the plan will also help counter rising global inequality by making it tougher for large businesses to pay low taxes by availing the services of tax havens. Critics of the OECD's proposal, however, see the global minimum tax as a threat. They argue that without tax competition between governments, the world would be taxed a lot more than it is today, thus adversely affecting global economic growth.

In other words, these critics believe that it is the threat of tax competition that keeps a check on governments which would otherwise tax their citizens heavily to fund profligate spending programs.

## THE GIST

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Many believe that the plan will help counter rising global inequality by making it tougher for large businesses to pay low taxes by availing the services of tax havens. It will also help governments collect the revenues required for social spending.



Nirmala Sitharaman

## 8% annual rise takes notes in circulation to ₹32 lakh crore

### **Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said notes in circulation (NiC) had witnessed an annual growth of 7.98% to ₹31.92 lakh crore as of December 2, 2022.

In a reply in the Lok Sabha, Ms. Sitharaman said the demand for currency depended upon several macroeconomic factors, including economic growth and the level of interest rates.

The quantum of cash or banknotes in the economy depended on the requirement for meeting the demand for them due to the GDP growth, inflation, replacement of soiled banknotes and growth in non-cash modes of payment.

She stressed that the mission of the Union government was to move towards a less cash economy to reduce the generation and circulation of black money and promote digital economy.

Both the government and RBI had taken measures to promote a less cash economy and encourage digital payment, she said.

With regard to 'Rationalisation of Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) for Debit Card Transaction', she said the RBI had advised banks to ensure that merchants on-boarded by them did not pass on MDR charges to customers while accepting payments through debit cards.

# Monetary policy is hostage to veg prices: PMEAC member

Poonam Gupta urges price stabilisation efforts to balance demand and supply of vegetables, moots steps to buffer economy from shocks such as high inflation, oil prices, capital outflows

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

India's economic growth is likely to be subdued in the coming year, but inflation will also subside partly due to monetary policy effects and partly due to base effects, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council member Poonam Gupta said on Monday, mooted steps to buffer the economy from recurrent shocks like high inflation, oil prices or capital outflows.

Ms. Gupta, also director general of the National

## Need for targeted action

India should manage its vegetable prices better than it has, says PMEAC's Gupta



- Inflation will subside due to monetary policy as well as base effects
- Accelerating inflation driven by high vegetable prices, a domestic issue
- Growth will be subdued in coming year and exports will be hit by lower global demand

Council for Applied Economic Research, said global growth would slow down as predicted by most agencies. India's inflation

acceleration to close to 7% this year has been mainly driven by high vegetable prices, which is a domestic issue and not an 'external'

one, she said.

"It is really sad in a way that our monetary policy is held hostage by vegetable prices. And monetary policy is a blunt instrument to address that kind of inflation," she underlined, suggesting price 'stabilisation' efforts to balance domestic demand and supply issues for vegetables.

"Surely, our economy, which is more than \$3 trillion, can manage its vegetable prices better than it has," she concluded at a discussion on the upcoming Budget hosted by the Ananta Centre.

# What are carbon markets and how do they operate?

What are the Opposition's concerns about the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022? What are carbon credits and how will they help reduce the emission of greenhouse gases?

Diksha Munjal

## The story so far:

The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was passed in Parliament on December 12, despite the Opposition's demands to send it for scrutiny to a parliamentary committee. The Bill empowers the government to establish carbon markets in India and specify a carbon credit trading scheme.

## What are carbon markets?

Article six of the 2015 Paris Agreement provides for the use of international carbon markets by countries to fulfil their nationally determined contributions (NDC) to keep global warming within 2°C. Carbon markets are essentially a tool for putting a price on carbon emissions – they establish trading systems where

carbon credits or allowances can be bought and sold. A carbon credit is a kind of tradable permit that, as per UN standards, equals one tonne of carbon dioxide removed, reduced, or sequestered from the atmosphere. A United Nations Development Program (UNDP) release this year noted that interest in carbon markets is growing globally – 83% of NDCs submitted by countries mention their intent to make use of international market mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are broadly two types of carbon markets that exist today – compliance markets and voluntary markets. Voluntary markets are those in which emitters – corporations, private individuals, and others – buy carbon credits to offset the emission of one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> or an equivalent greenhouse gas. Such carbon credits are created by

activities which reduce CO<sub>2</sub> from the air, such as afforestation. In a voluntary market, a corporation looking to compensate for its unavoidable emissions, purchases carbon credits from an entity engaged in projects that reduce, remove, capture, or avoid emissions. For instance, in the aviation sector, airlines may purchase carbon credits to offset the carbon footprint of the flights they operate. Compliance markets on the other hand which are set up by policies at the national, regional, and/or international level are officially regulated.

## What are the challenges?

The UNDP points out serious concerns pertaining to carbon markets – ranging from double counting of greenhouse gas reductions, quality and authenticity of climate projects that generate credits to poor market transparency. There are also

concerns about 'greenwashing' – companies may buy credits, simply offsetting carbon footprints instead of reducing their overall emissions.

## What are concerns about new Bill?

The Bill empowers the Centre to specify a carbon credits trading scheme. Under the Bill, the central government or an authorised agency will be able to issue carbon credit certificates. These carbon credit certificates will be tradeable in nature. Other persons would be able to buy carbon credit certificates on a voluntary basis. Opposition members pointed out that the Bill does not provide clarity on the mechanism to be used for the trading of carbon credit certificates and about who will regulate such trading. Members also raised questions about the right Ministry to bring in a scheme of this nature, pointing out that while carbon market schemes in other countries are framed by their environment ministries, the Indian Bill was tabled by the Power Ministry.

Another important concern raised is that the Bill does not specify whether certificates under already existing schemes would also be interchangeable and tradeable with carbon credit certificates. Two types of tradeable certificates are already issued in India – Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) and Energy Savings Certificates (ESCs).

## THE GIST

▼  
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▼  
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# 80% decline in insurgency-related violence in northeast: Minister

Consistent efforts by the government has 'weakened the ecosystem of terror' and has led to pronounced reduction of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, says Anurag Thakur; NIA has been made a truly federal structure, he adds

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Monday said that consistent efforts by the Union government had "weakened the ecosystem of terror" and had led to a "pronounced" reduction of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. It has also resulted in a 80% decline in insurgency-related violence in northeast India, he added.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Thakur said the government had worked on the legal front by strengthening the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and also taken steps at the



**Curbing violence:** The AFSPA has been rolled back in Tripura, Meghalaya, and 60% of Assam. NISSAR AHMAD

enforcement level by giving the National Investigation Agency (NIA) a truly federal structure through amendments to the relevant law. "The collective effect of these measures has

been weakening the ecosystem of terrorism," he said.

Without naming Pakistan, Mr. Thakur said a neighbouring country was seen sheltering terrorists

and propounding violence. He said that an era of peace had dawned on the northeastern region since 2014 as insurgency-related violence had seen a sharp decline and civilian deaths had dropped by 89%.

He said the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) too had been rolled back from large parts of the northeast, including the whole of Tripura and Meghalaya.

## China border row

Speaking at another press conference, BJP MP from Ladakh Jamyang Tsering Namgyal said that as the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is not demarcated, graziers in the border villages along China have

faced problems in the past too.

Mr. Namgyal said, "Due to the border not demarcated, many such issues came up in the past and are surfacing today as well, it will continue in future also. Till the border is demarcated, such issues will remain...it is a larger issue, but Modiji is taking many steps such as Vibrant Village Programme to address it."

As reported by *The Hindu* on September 20, the village head of one of the last settlements along the LAC in Chushul said that in the past one-year, at least three large grazing areas near the village have been turned into "no-man's land" or "buffer zones".

# Jawans stood their ground at Yangtse, says Jaishankar

External Affairs Minister says no one should, directly or indirectly, criticise soldiers; he also provided clarifications on the amended death penalty clause in the Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**“W**e should not, directly or indirectly, criticise our jawans,” External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in the Lok Sabha on Monday. They were standing their ground against the Chinese at Yangtse and did not deserve the word *pitaai* (beaten), he added.

The Minister was reacting to comments made by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

“Our soldiers are standing in Yangtse at 13,000 feet defending our borders. They do not deserve to have the word *pitaai*. The word should not be used for our jawans. Our jawans are standing their ground. They should be respected, honoured and appreciated,” Dr. Jaishankar said.

Responding to questions from the Congress on China and the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Dr. Jaishankar asked, “If we were in-



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament on Monday. PTI

different to China, then who sent the Indian Army to the border? If we were indifferent to China, then why are we pressuring China for de-escalation and disengagement today? Why are we saying publicly that our relations are not normal?”

While passing the Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019, the Minister clarified that the clause on the death penalty, which Opposition MPs had sought to be reconsidered, had been amended to punishment with death or with impris-

onment for life.

The Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill passed by the Lok Sabha will bring the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) into domestic law and enable Indian authorities to take action against piracy on the high seas.

During the discussion on the Bill last week, Opposition MPs had asked the government to reconsider the clause for the mandatory death penalty in the Bill for any action that might cause death, and that it should be life imprison-

ment instead. Stating that the government should consider the implications of the death penalty properly, Congress MP Manish Tewari had said that this could hamper extradition from countries that did not have the death penalty, and where piracy may not even have caused death.

During a discussion in the House on the Bill before it was passed, Dr. Jaishankar said this had now been amended to punishment with death or with imprisonment for life, if such a person was committing the act of piracy that was causing death or in an attempt thereof, which he said was in line with the Supreme Court's pronouncement that the death penalty should be awarded in the “rarest of rare” cases, as well as in line with the extradition provisions of many countries.

Introducing the Bill for discussion, Dr. Jaishankar said that out of the 18 recommendations of the Standing Committee, 14 had been incorporated.

General Studies Paper I	
A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
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 <sup>th</sup> 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
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;

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
General Studies Paper III	
A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
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
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;



T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
<b>General Studies Paper IV</b>	
A	Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;
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.
I	Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
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.