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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 Haameed 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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T.N. stops auction of stolen Nataraja idol in France

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

The Idol Wing CID (IWCID) of the Tamil Nadu police on Thursday successfully stopped the scheduled auctioning of a bronze idol of Nataraja by *Christies.com*, France.

The rare variety bronze idol was suspected to have been stolen from Kayathar in Thoothukudi district half a century ago.

The officers of the spe-

cial wing came across the auction notice issued by *Christies.com*, France, listing a bronze 'Shiva Nataraja' idol for auction on Friday at a bid price of 2,00,000 to 3,00,000 Euros (₹1.76 crore to ₹2.64

crore approximately). The bronze idol belongs to the Vijayanagara period – 15th-16th century. Director General of Police, IWCID, K. Jayanth

Murali said, "As the idol was listed as belonging to Tamil Nadu, we decided to examine it when we came



across an image taken in 1958 by the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), which bore resemblance to the idol of Nataraja listed for auction in France. IFP photo records confirmed that the listed idol was a stolen one.

After examination by an expert, we sent the records to the auction house through authorities concerned to stop the bid. Our efforts succeeded and

the proposed auctioning has been stopped."

Stolen in 1972

The IFP image of the Nataraja idol was taken in 1958 in Kothanda Rameshwara Temple, Kayathar, Kovilpatti, now in Thoothukudi district (earlier in composite Tirunelveli district). The HR&CE (Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments) Department records reveal that the idol was stolen in 1972 and was

not recovered thereafter.

The records of the HR&CE Department too clearly establish the idol was stolen in 1972 and the Kovilpatti police station Loose Leaf Index has entries to establish the same.

"We have now insisted that the idol should be returned to India as we have adequately established the ownership as required under the UNESCO Convention of 1970," said Mr. Jayanth Murali.



On the cusp of change: (Clockwise from left) An aerial view of Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, where around 11 lakh urban poor live cheek by jowl in over 1.2 lakh cramped, tin-roofed shanties in a maze of crowded, winding alleys spread over 600 acres, a pall of smoke hangs over a house that doubles up as a pottery manufacturing unit in Kumbharwada, the potters' colony in the southeast corner of the slum cluster; and finished products at a pottery unit. EMMAHUAU, YOGINI

Dreams, doubts abound in Dharavi

With the Adani Group clinching the project to redevelop Asia's largest slum, located on premium land in the heart of India's financial capital, lakhs of people who live and work in the area's cramped lanes are looking forward to a better life in a high-rise with constant water supply and proper sanitation. However, worries linger over the fate of the 12,000-odd small-scale manufacturing units that thrive in Dharavi, creating an informal economy with an estimated annual turnover of \$1 billion, and the residents who do not meet the eligibility criteria for free housing under the project, reports **Sonam Saigal**

Every morning, Asha, a 27-year-old schoolteacher, wakes up at the crack of dawn to help her disabled mother get ahead of the long queues outside the community toilets in central Mumbai's Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, where around 11 lakh urban poor live cheek by jowl in over 1.2 lakh cramped, tin-roofed shanties in a maze of crowded, winding alleys spread over 600 acres of premium land in the heart of the country's financial capital.

"All I want from the redevelopment is a house with an attached toilet," she says, referring to the ₹20,000-crore Dharavi redevelopment project, which Adani Realty, the real estate arm of the Adani Group, bagged on November 29, with a bid of ₹5,069 crore. The bid is an initial investment for the project, touted as "the world's largest urban renewal scheme", which aims at demolishing hutments and rehabilitating around 6.5 lakh residents within seven years in 300 sq. ft. flats in a cluster of high-rises. The project will cover the entire 600-acre area and free up around 5 crore sq. ft. of saleable built-up space that can be used as upscale homes and offices to help the developer recoup costs and make profits.

Once a small fishing village, bounded by the Mahim creek and its mangroves, on the banks of the Mithi river, Dharavi today is one of the most densely populated areas in the world (3.6 lakh people per sq. km). The area is sandwiched between the city's Western and Central suburban railway lines, located close to the airport and sits near the Bandra-Kurla Complex, India's richest business district, where commercial office premiums are among the highest in the country.

Hopeful and anxious

In the works for the past 18 years, the redevelopment project has left thousands of families hopeful and anxious as this is the fourth attempt by the Maharashtra government to get the project going. Numerous residents are looking forward to a better life in a swanky high-rise with constant water supply, electricity, proper sanitation, sewage disposal and piped gas, and the area's transformation into an integrated planned township with access to schools, hospitals and green spaces.

However, worries linger over the fate of the 12,000 small-scale manufacturing units that thrive in Dharavi, creating an informal economy with an estimated annual turnover of \$1 billion, and the residents who do not meet the eligibility criteria for free housing. Only those who can produce documents to prove that their residential unit existed in the area before January 1, 2011, are entitled to a free house. Those who are ineligible will be provided homes after paying the cost of construction. Such conditions might result in the displacement of a large number of residents.

Ramaben, 69, who has been living in a 10x10 ft. hutment in the locality for the past 50 years, is hopeful of change. "I have lived my entire life with my three sons in the dirt and filth of these slums. I don't want my grandchildren to have the same life. The government owes it to us. I cast my vote and my children pay taxes. We deserve clean drinking water and proper sanitation. I hope this happens in my lifetime," she says.

Lalita, a government schoolteacher in the nearby locality of Subhash Nagar, is optimistic yet sceptical about the project. "It has been 18 years since I and many others in Dharavi have been listening to promises and assurances of rehabilitation. It has been a game of wait and watch."

In 2009, a preliminary survey by Mumbai's civic body, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corpo-

ROAD TO PROGRESS

October 1: The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government invites global bids for the Dharavi redevelopment project at a base price of ₹1,600 crore.

October 18: The Ministry of Railways' Rail Land Development Authority hands over 47 hectares of land in Dadar to the Dharavi Redevelopment Authority.

November 29: Adani Realty bags the project with a bid of ₹5,069 crore.

The company will now have to form a special purpose vehicle (SPV), which will prepare a master plan for the project.

The State government will have 20% stake in the SPV and 80% will belong to the company.

The State authorities aim to complete the rehabilitation of slum dwellers within seven years. However, experts say it could take double the time.

The cost of the project has gone up by more than five times since 2004. Now, it is estimated to be ₹20,000 crore.

ration, in one of the five zones in Dharavi found that only 37% of families (3,127 of 8,478 hutments) were eligible for new homes, sparking fear that a majority of the residents would be deprived of free housing under the project.

Manisha Lakda, 46, a mother of three who lost her husband to COVID-19 last year, fears her family may not figure in the official list of 56,000 families that meet the cut-off date for rehabilitation. Ms. Lakda, who hails from Bhilal in Chhattisgarh, says she may not possess sufficient documents to establish proof of residency in Dharavi before 2011. "I am an uneducated woman and I run my household by working as a domestic help in two houses. I have three mouths to feed and I don't know if our lives will ever change as I have no idea about all the documents required for us to secure a permanent house," she says.

Uncertainty over livelihoods

The project also casts uncertainty over the livelihoods of lakhs of residents who work in the informal economy as potters, tanners, weavers, savoury makers, and waste collectors and sorters in thousands of small-scale units that flourish in Dharavi. In Kumbharwada, the potters' colony in the southeast corner of the slum cluster, most dwellings double up as workshops. The neighbourhood is named after the Kumbhars, the community of potters who fled drought and famine in Saurashtra, Gujarat, in the 19th century and set up kilns in an area in south Bombay. In the 1930s, they were allocated land in Dharavi.

Dhansukh Bhai, 69, says his family has been engaged in the pottery business for five generations. "My children and I were born here. Our lives are secure because of our business. I don't know how the government plans to rehabilitate our pottery units. There are thousands like me here. We even export our products. I don't know what this project has in store for us," he says.

A pall of smoke hangs over the house of Yusuf Karim, 33, who lives in a 200 sq. ft. hutment in Kumbharwada with his family of eight. As the potter's ovens emit heat while baking clay lamps, Mr. Karim says he is looking forward to the redevelopment project, but is worried he may not be eligible for it. "I am not only waiting to live in a bigger house but also for the rehabilitation of my workshop. My establishment needs to move with me the way it is right now, else my work and the livelihood of 13 staff members will suffer."

Two brothers, Abbas and Rameez, who live in the same locality, run their own pottery unit, which has started manufacturing terracotta water coolers, water cups, bowls for yogurt and ornamental vases. The duo has created a website

that features their products, which are exported to several countries. "We have employed 10 workers and have an entire set-up to turn clay into terracotta, paint the wares, dry them and pack them before shipping. How will all this be shifted? We need an open space for the products to dry. If we are going to be moved into a four- or five-storey building, how will we work there?" says Rameez, emphasising that such units cannot be operated from flats in high-rises.

Surekha Kamble, 31, makes *farsan* (savouries) at her home-cum-workspace in Dharavi's R.P. Nagar, which reaches confectionery stores across the city every morning. She says the project might break her supply chain as she now hands over all the cartons of snacks to her mother-in-law's distant relative, Sanand Bhai, who lives just 15 minutes away in King's Circle. "He delivers the goods to shops and malls

The aim is to take care of the ineligible people as well despite the terms and conditions. You cannot wish them away

S.V.R. SRINIVAS
CEO of the Dharavi redevelopment project

in the city. If we are forced to move out of Dharavi, will it be possible for him to come and pick up the food every morning? Our family has been able to sustain itself for all these years because of this business," Ms. Kamble says.

High rate of property tax

Another cause of distress for slum dwellers is the high rate of property tax that will be levied on their businesses when they will have to move out of Dharavi and set up shop within the metropolitan city limits. Sudhakar Mule, 56, who runs a plastic recycling unit in Ashok Nagar, which is one of the 15,000 single-room factories in the slum that process 80% of Mumbai's plastic waste, is unsure about the future. "I am a commerce graduate. I understand how these things [redevelopment] work. But I have no idea what is going to happen to my 23-year-old shop," he says.

Mr. Mule adds that there have been no talks on rehabilitating their workplaces. "Even if that is sorted out, how will the stamp duty and property tax be calculated? How many of us will be able to afford it? It is not easy to just pick us up from one place and put us in another spot," he says.



Dharavi also houses leather tanneries that manufacture footwear, garments, bags and belts. Suleman, 71, who runs a shop that sells leather goods, says, "I have serious doubts about whether a full-scale redevelopment can really take off. There are small-scale businesses inside almost every hutment. I am sure the government does not have the exact count of people who live here and the businesses that operate here."

Rajendra Korde, chairman of the Dharavi Redevelopment Committee, says going by experience, he doesn't trust the government's promises. "We have been listening to tall claims of ensuring the resettlement of people and rehabilitation of commercial establishments since 2004. This is a special project; there should not be a cut-off date for residents and businesses. A fresh survey should be conducted when the project begins and residents are shifted to transit camps."

Major challenges

Accommodating ineligible people is a big challenge as you cannot expand horizontally in Dharavi, says S.V.R. Srinivas, CEO of the Dharavi redevelopment project and Commissioner of the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority. "The number of people not eligible for rehabilitation is going to be very large, about 30%-40%. In a Slum Rehabilitation Authority scheme, where there are usually 300 hutments, 30%-40% translates to about 70-80 hutments. Here, the number of houses is in the thousands. The aim is to also take care of all these people despite the terms and conditions. You cannot just wish them away. They have been living here for decades and our policy deals with them."

Mr. Srinivas says a fresh survey will be conducted and it will involve collecting biometrics of eligible residents. Another challenge that the project faces is that of a high population density. "How do we accommodate people by adhering to town planning norms? The complexity is added by the thousands of commercial units. Homes and shops must be rehabilitated in a proper way."

He says efforts are on to rehabilitate the commercial units in the same area and provide them with a five-year State GST refund. The slum dwellers won't be moved to transit camps but will be shifted to houses that will be built on 47 hectares of railway land in Dadar, 3 km from Dharavi, acquired for the project. The land will initially house 20,000 residential units, Mr. Srinivas says.

The Adani Group is now waiting for the State government to release a letter of intent (LOI), which will officially confirm that the company has clinched the global bid to redevelop Dharavi. The LOI is expected to be released on December 17 and it will list the requirements that the company met to secure the multi-crore project.

'A dream that can come true'

Amita Bhide, professor at the Centre for Urban Policy and Governance, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, flags a set of concerns. "The project involves surveys that are almost two decades old. So, to decide who is eligible while managing the logistics of resettlement and keeping the project financially viable is a big challenge. Any redevelopment flattens the complexity of people and communities living there. It ranges from very vulnerable to very stable. How many of them will be able to hold on to a project of this scale? It is an issue of displacement. Dharavi is a huge site of the informal economy. What will happen to those units? Do they have a place in a project of this size?"

However, Dipti Matre, a social worker in Dharavi, says it is not an impossible project to implement. "Yes, the place has a unique demographic, but if all the players learn their lessons from all the failed attempts, this dream can come true."



I have three mouths to feed and I don't know if our lives will ever change as I have no idea about all the documents required for us to secure a permanent house

MANISHA LAKDA
Resident of Dharavi and mother of three who lost her husband to COVID-19 last year

'U.S. created Indo-Pacific concept to contain China'

Chinese Ambassador to France Lu Shaye blames 'foreign forces' for fanning recent protests in the country; reiterates Beijing's hardening opposition to groupings such as the Quad

Ananth Krishnan

BEIJING

There "is no such concept as Indo-Pacific" which was "created by the United States" to bring in partners such as India to "contain" China, a Chinese diplomat has said, reflecting Beijing's hardening opposition to both Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy as well as regional groupings such as the Quad.

"In fact, there is no such concept as an 'Indo-Pacific in geopolitics,'" Chinese diplomat and Ambassador to France Lu Shaye said in an interaction with French journalists, a transcript of which was published on Wednesday by China's Embassy in Paris.

"It is a concept created by the U.S.," he added. "In the past, we used to talk about the Pacific or the Asia-Pacific region, never about the Indo-Pacific. Why did the Americans include the Indian Ocean? It is because they believe their Asia-Pacific allies alone are no longer enough to contain China, they want to bring in India and other U.S. allies, such as France, which considers itself an Indo-Pacific country. This is wrong."

Asked if it was "wrong" for France to consider itself as an Indo-Pacific



Locked and loaded: An MH-60 Seahawk seen on the U.S. Navy's *USS Tripoli* assault ship while docked off Sydney in November. AFP

country, he continued: "I think it is wrong for France to position itself in this way, because it is a confrontational mentality, a Cold War mentality, and that is exactly what we are against."

His comments underline Beijing's hardening view of both the Indo-Pacific idea as well as regional groupings such as the Quad. China officially does not use the term, and refers to the region as the Asia-Pacific.

Change in tone

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who initially dismissed the Quad as an idea that was as transient "as sea foam", also struck a harder tone earlier this year, when he equated the U.S., Australia, India, Japan Quad grouping with the

"Five Eyes" intelligence alliance involving the Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the U.S. and U.K. and the AUKUS (Australia-U.K.-U.S.) defence pact.

"The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy is becoming a byword for bloc politics," he said during China's annual Parliament session. "It professes desire for international cooperation, but in reality is stoking regional rivalry. From Five Eyes and Quad to AUKUS... It is by no means a blessing but a sinister move. The real goal for the Indo-Pacific strategy is to establish an Indo-Pacific version of NATO."

India has strongly pushed back against China's invoking of NATO as a comparison, and pointed to the fact that India is not a U.S. ally and the Quad

was not a military alliance. Indian officials have also rejected China's argument that the U.S. was "stoking" recent tensions in India-China relations, which New Delhi attributes to Beijing's aggressive posture along the Line of Actual Control. Most Chinese strategic experts, in contrast, attribute the downturn in relations to India's increasingly close ties with the U.S.

'Foreign forces'

Mr. Lu, in the interview, also accused unnamed "foreign forces" for being involved in November's protests in China against lockdowns and restrictions under the "zero-COVID" policy, which were removed finally on December 7. Beijing had initially announced easing measures in early November, but an outbreak of cases around the country that month led to only more lockdowns, fanning public frustration and culminating in protests end-November.

"Some local governments did not fully understand the central government's policies," he said. "We had strict policies in the past but when the central government asked to ease them, they were unable to fully understand it in the first place."

States can enact laws on uniform civil code, Law Minister tells Rajya Sabha

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The States are empowered to enact personal laws that decide issues such as succession, marriage and divorce, in their endeavour to secure a uniform civil code (UCC), Law Minister Kiren Rijiju informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

The Minister made these remarks in a written reply to a question posed by Communist Party of India (Marxist) member John Brittas, asking whether the Centre was aware of the States formulating their own laws with respect to the uniform civil code.

“Yes, sir,” said Mr. Rijiju, “Article 44 of the Constitution provides that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.”

Mr. Rijiju added, “Perso-

‘Till new system comes, vacancies will be an issue’

NEW DELHI

The issue of vacancies and appointments in the higher judiciary will continue to arise until a new system is created, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said. His remark comes amid the war of words between the Centre and the Supreme Court over the delay in judicial appointments. » [PAGE 12](#)

nal laws such as intestacy and succession, wills, joint family and partition, marriage and divorce, relate to Entry 5 of List-III-Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, and hence, the States are also empowered to legislate upon them.”

The Law Minister’s com-

ments assume significance given the backdrop of several Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled States announcing their intention to implement the UCC.

Taking the lead

While Uttarakhand was the first to set up a panel to explore the possibility of a common civil code, the Gujarat government also announced its intention of doing so just ahead of its Assembly election.

The party had made the implementation of the UCC a part of its Himachal Pradesh manifesto as well, although it lost the Assembly election. Earlier this month, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said a committee would be constituted to implement the UCC.

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‘States can enact laws on uniform civil code’

On December 9, BJP MP Kirodi Lal Meena moved a Private Member’s Bill on the UCC amid strong Opposition protests. The Bill was eventually introduced, with 63 members voting in favour of the motion while 23 members opposed it. Defending Mr. Meena, Leader of the Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal had said, “It is the legitimate right of a member to raise an issue which is under the directive principles of the Constitution. Let this subject be debated.”

What are Kerala's University Laws (amendment) Bills?

Why is the Kerala government attempting to remove Governor Arif Mohammed Khan as the Chancellor of State universities? What are the arguments for and against such a move?

Aswin V. N.

The story so far:

The Kerala government has passed the two University Laws (amendment) Bills in the State Assembly to amend laws relating to the governance of State universities and to remove Governor Arif Mohammed Khan as the Chancellor of said universities.

What do the Bills say?

The proposed legislations will amend the statutes of 14 universities established by legislative Acts in Kerala and remove the Governor as the Chancellor. The Bills will give the government power to appoint eminent academicians as Chancellors of various universities, thus ending the Governor's watchdog role in university administration. The Bills also provide provisions to limit the term of the

appointed chancellor to five years.

How did the Bill come into being?

Mr. Khan and the State Government have been at loggerheads for months now. It reached a simmering point when the Governor accused Kannur University VC Prof. Gopinath Raveendran of plotting to endanger his life at the 2019 Indian History Congress. This took a turn for the worse when the Governor denied assent to the controversial Lok Ayukta (Amendment) Bill and University Laws (Amendment) Bill passed earlier by the State Assembly. The fallout from this stand-off between the Governor and the Government led to Mr. Khan claiming that he has the power to dismiss Ministers who criticise him. Mr. Khan went to the extent of suggesting that the Chief Minister should take action against Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal as he had

"ceased to enjoy my [Governor's] pleasure." The worsening relationship between the State and Mr. Khan reached a tipping point with the Supreme Court order invalidating the Kerala Technological University VC's appointment. Following this judgment, the Governor demanded the resignations of 11 other VCs claiming that they were appointed through the same procedure that was invalidated by the top court.

Why is the State government amending University laws?

The Minister for Law, P. Rajeev, while tabling the Bills, pointed out that the UGC guidelines, which earlier used to be considered mandatory for Central universities and "partially mandatory and partially directive" for State universities, had been made legally binding for all universities by way of recent rulings by

the Supreme Court. "Worryingly, such precedence pointed towards a scenario in which the legislative powers of the Assembly on all subjects on the Concurrent List (of the Constitution) could be undermined through a subordinate legislation or an executive order issued by the Centre," he said. Moreover, the State government has claimed the recommendation of the Punchhi Commission on Centre-State Relations to refrain from "burdening the Governor with positions and powers which are not envisaged by the Constitution and which may lead the office to controversies or public criticism" as the rationale behind the Bills.

What are arguments against the Bill?

As described above, the Bills would give the State Government more leeway in appointing its own nominees as VCs of State Universities. This would mean a transfer of power over university administration from the Governor and the UGC to the State Government. While both the ruling front and the Opposition seem united in stripping away the Governor's Chancellorship, the Opposition fears that the State Government would try to turn State universities into its fiefdom, leading to the erosion of the autonomy universities enjoy.

(With inputs from Sarath Babu George, K.S. Sudhi and G. Anand)

THE GIST

▼ The Kerala government has passed the two University Laws (amendment) Bills in the State Assembly to amend laws relating to the governance of State universities and to remove Governor Arif Mohammed Khan as the Chancellor of State universities.

▼ The worsening relationship between the Kerala government and Mr. Khan reached a tipping point when the latter demanded the resignations of 11 university Vice-Chancellors following a Supreme Court judgment.

▼ The new Bills will give the government power to appoint eminent academicians as Chancellors to various universities.

Reflections on the fading principle of non-intervention

The President of India, Draupadi Murmu, and the Vice-President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar, have weighed in on the surpassing significance of the separation of powers in the Indian Constitution. However, both did so in different ways, in substance and style.

Wise counsel

In her valedictory address on November 26 to the Constitution Day celebrations organised by the Supreme Court of India, Ms. Murmu said, “The Constitution outlines a map for good governance. The most crucial feature in this is the doctrine of separation of functions and powers of the three Organs of the State.... It has been the hallmark of our Republic that the three organs have respected the boundaries set in place by the Constitution... It is understandable that in the zeal to serve the best interests of the citizens, one or the other may be tempted to overstep. Yet, we can say with satisfaction and pride that the three have always attempted to keep the boundaries in mind while doing their best to function in the service of the people.”

These measured words do not point a finger at any particular organ of state. Ms. Murmu cautions them all against excessive “zeal” which may lead to transgressing the “boundaries” set for them by the Constitution. Indeed, it can be said without fear of contradiction that seldom has a leader sounded a caution so delicately and yet so effectively. Her wise counsel should be a guide to the political class and the judges.

Mr. Dhankhar, in his capacity as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, addressed the House (“258th session of the Rajya Sabha”) for the first time on December 7. Devoting a portion of his address to the doctrine of separation of powers in the Constitution, he said, “Democracy blossoms ... when its three facets... scrupulously adhere to their respective domains. The sublimity of the Doctrine of Separation of Powers, is realised



Vivek Katju

is a retired diplomat

In the tense interplay between the executive and the judiciary on the appointment of judges, it is worthwhile recalling what ought to hold the key

when Legislature, Judiciary and Executive optimally function in tandem and togetherness, meticulously ensuring scrupulous adherence to respective jurisdictional domain. Any incursion by one, howsoever subtle, in the domain of [the] other has the potential to upset the governance apple cart.”

And a radical departure

As the Vice-President proceeded further, he departed radically from the President's views. He said, “We are indeed faced with this grim reality of frequent incursions.”. President Murmu had only pointed to “temptations”. Far from making the charge of “frequent incursions”, she had categorically said that it was the “hallmark” of the Indian Republic that the three organs had respected their constitutionally prescribed boundaries.

In the context of the “grim reality of frequent incursions”, Mr. Dhankhar basically focused on the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the 99th Constitutional Amendment setting up the National Judicial Appointment Commission (NJAC). He said, “This historic parliamentary mandate was undone by the Supreme Court on October 16, 2015 by a majority of 4:1 finding the same as not being in consonance with the judicially evolved doctrine of ‘Basic Structure’ of the Constitution.” Stating this to be an unparalleled development in “democratic history”, he added, “We need to bear in mind that in democratic governance, ‘Basic’ of any ‘Basic Structure’ is the prevalence of the primacy of the mandate of the people reflected in the Parliament. Parliament is the exclusive and ultimate determinative of the architecture of the Constitution”. He regretted that Parliament had not focussed on this matter for the past seven years. It is difficult to recall another instance of any Vice-President having expressed his views on a judicial decision and in such a manner. But then

these are new times and new precedents are being set.

The office of the Republic's President is above politics. The Vice-President has to be fundamentally above politics too; he/she can only enter that arena when he/she has to exercise a ‘casting vote’ in case of an ‘equality of votes’ in a matter under the consideration of the Rajya Sabha. In the past, Vice-President's have, in their addresses outside the House, given voice to their views on public policies. Mr. Dhankhar's choice of words on the Supreme Court's decision on the NJAC also tends to give an impression that he not merely made a comment on a specific case but raised questions of the long-settled matter of the ambit of Parliament's powers to amend the Constitution.

The Minister of Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju, has clarified in Parliament that the Government does not propose to re-introduce the NJAC with amendments. He was critical of the present collegium system for appointment of judges earlier. The Supreme Court is seized of the matter relating to delays by the Government in acting on the recommendation of the collegium in some cases. As the matter is *sub judice*, it would be improper to comment on the issues. It would not be improper though to recall what Mohammad Hidayatullah, a former Chief Justice of India – he is also one of Vice-President Dhankhar's predecessor's – has recorded in his autobiography, *My Own Boswell*. He wrote that the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, told Justice Hidayatullah when he was Chief Justice of the State that he would never intervene with judges' appointments but caution him if he heard something adverse about any of his recommendations. This goes back to 1957, decades before the collegium system, but the principle followed by Dr. Katju holds the key even today to the interplay between the executive and the judiciary on the appointment of judges.

Need a new appointment system to fill vacancies in higher judiciary: Rijju

The Law Minister said the government had returned 20 names to the Collegium, but it had appointed 165 judges across various High Courts, making it the highest for a calendar year

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The issue of vacancies and appointments in the higher judiciary will continue to arise until a new system is created, Law Minister Kiren Rijju told the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

The Law Minister's comments, made while giving answers to supplementaries during the Question Hour, comes in the midst of an ongoing war of words between the government and the Supreme Court over the delay in appointments to the higher judiciary.

Asked if the government would revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, Mr. Rijju said that several prominent jurists, retired judges, advocates, and



Questions will keep arising on vacancy of judges and appointments till we create a new system for appointments

KIREN RIJJU
Law Minister

leaders of political parties have opined that the striking down of the Act by the Supreme Court was not correct. The issue of the NJAC Act, which sought to replace the current Collegium system, has also been raised by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar twice over the past 15 days.

30% vacancy

As on December 9, 777 judges are working in the High Courts against the sanctioned strength of 1,108, leaving a vacancy of

331 or 30%. To fill these vacancies, 147 proposals are at various stages of discussion between the Supreme Court Collegium and the Union government, while the names for another 184 vacancies are yet to be received by the Collegiums of various High Courts.

In a written response, the Minister said that while the government had returned 20 names back to the Collegium, it has appointed 165 judges across various High Courts, making it the highest for a ca-

alendar year.

Mr. Rijju said the total number of cases pending in various courts is about to touch five crore, adding that the impact of such a huge pendency of court cases on the public is obvious. "Currently, the government has limited powers to fill the vacancies [in courts]," he said, adding that the Centre cannot look for names other than those recommended by the Collegium.

The Law Minister said that somehow he felt that "we are not working as per the spirit of the House and feelings of the people of the country". "We are giving our full support to reduce pendency of cases. But questions will keep arising on vacancy of judges and appointments till we create a new system for appointments," he added.

Is the RTI Act fulfilling its purpose?

PARLEY



Anjali Bhardwaj is the Co-Convenor of the National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information

The Right to Information (RTI) Act was passed by Parliament in 2005, aiming to give people access to the records of the Central and State governments. It was a vital reform to help activists and individuals ensure transparency and accountability in governance. In a discussion moderated by **Sonikka Loganathan**, Anjali Bhardwaj and Saurav Das take stock of what's working and the issues that appear to be weakening the law. Edited excerpts:

Is the RTI Act fulfilling its purpose?

Anjali Bhardwaj: It has been one of the most empowering legislations for people because this is the one law that puts an obligation on the government to respond to them in a time-bound manner, to get them information to hold the government accountable. The law has, in many ways, tilted the balance of power in favour of those governed. That is, I think, something that people in the country at large have understood. So when there is denial of their rights and entitlements such as their rations, pensions, medicines in hospitals or education in schools, they reach out to government departments to file an RTI application, and very often they do get information.

We have seen that a majority of the RTI applications are filed by people who are asking about their basic rights and entitlements. So it has fulfilled its purpose to that extent. The other thing is that to hold high offices to account, people have used the RTI law to know what is happening with taxpayers' money. This has enabled them to expose big-ticket scams such as the Adarsh, Commonwealth Games and Vyapam scams. They've also been able to expose human rights violations, and then force accountability in those cases as well.

Saurav Das: To a certain extent, yes. The Act is still effective despite the widespread attempts to dilute its efficacy. This is because the law was born out of a sustained people's movement. Officers still think twice before replying to an RTI query, which reflects the seriousness with which it is taken. The major impediment is the lack of awareness of this law and lack of widespread adoption. By adoption, I mean people really thinking of the law as their own creation. The day these two things are achieved, the RTI Act's real mandate will be realised.

Do you have to be an RTI expert to know how to properly file questions?



People at an RTI office in Bengaluru. THE HINDU

AB: What is remarkable about the RTI Act is that it came as a result of a very strong grassroots movement, where people from all walks of life came together to say that there was a need for a legislation to ensure that they were empowered to seek information from the government. The law basically ensures that there is no set format in which an RTI application has to be filed. It's a fairly straightforward, simple process. The quality of information one receives depends on how the questions are drafted and framed. Our research has shown that a very large percentage of RTI applications are filed by the poorest and the most marginalised, usually asking for information that relates to their very basic rights and entitlements.

So somebody asking for their ration card, whether the ration card has been made or not, it's a fairly simple question. And they're able to ask that question without too much training. But when one asks for complex information, which deals with, let's say, corruption, large scams or cases of violations of the law or human rights, that is when one needs to really frame the questions in a very detailed manner – where expertise helps.

SD: The beauty of this Act is its simplicity. But, for example, in High Courts, if you are asking for information, they have particular forms through which you can seek information. If you file an application in Odisha, they have a particular format for filing. These sorts of rules create hindrances for people.

AB: There are some States where you can only file an RTI application within 150 words. Condensing the question, especially for those who might not have the benefit of a formal education, becomes a challenge.



Successive governments have tried to whittle down this law, beginning with the United Progressive Alliance itself, the creator of this legislation

SAURAV DAS

Is the RTI ensuring transparency between the citizen and the government as it was intended to do?

SD: Very cleverly, the public information officers these days use words like this division does not have the information. So now they are putting, in a way, the liability on the applicant to find out which officer and which office will hold that information. This is not in consonance with the RTI Act because the liability is on the officer to find out who is holding the information and transfer the RTI application.

AB: They're supposed to specifically refer to which section they're using to deny information. Without even referring to a section, we are seeing a large number of denials where people are just told that this information cannot be provided to you, which is an illegal denial.

Was this reluctance to share information always a problem?

AB: When the law came in 2005, it revolutionised the information space. It meant that anyone could ask any public authority for information, and there has been resistance from the very beginning. The first attempt to amend the law came within 10 months of it being introduced. We're seeing that there are problems at various levels today. First, within the government, asking for information is not encouraged. Second, even maintaining datasets and information, putting information in the public domain has become a big problem. So during COVID-19, for example, when the government was asked how many people lost their lives due to lack of oxygen, about the number of migrant workers, on all of that the government said, we don't have any data. The 2021 census hasn't happened, and the government is now saying it's been indefinitely postponed. Now, that is a source of data. So if the government doesn't collect data, or doesn't put it out, then people's right to information becomes really restricted. There is a large-scale denial of information.

There have been several attempts by

governments to amend the law. And in every case, whether it was the proposed amendment to say that file notings will not be part of the right to information or it was to say that political parties will be left out of the ambit of the RTI Act, people protested and governments had to step back.

Of course, in 2019, they did go ahead and make the amendments (giving the government the power to set service conditions for information commissioners). But despite threats, attacks and murders of RTI users, people are still using the law extensively, which testifies to the fact that it's something that they find very powerful.

If the law has been whittled down, could you give us examples of the ways in which this has happened?

SD: Successive governments have tried to whittle down this law, beginning with the United Progressive Alliance itself, the creator of this law. State governments have tried and are still trying to do it. But the two biggest and successful attempts have been made or are being made by the National Democratic Alliance government. Once in 2019, and the second now, by way of the Data Protection Bill which will most likely pass.

AB: We have huge vacancies in information commissions, which means that appeals and complaints keep pending.

Other laws can impact the RTI Act such as the updated Data Protection Bill. Can you explain what kind of issues this is causing.

AB: The Data Protection Bill will set up a system of amending the RTI law in a manner that all personal information will be exempted. In a community where people are not being given their entitlements or rights under the public distribution system, for example, there is granular information that is put up saying this is the name of the person, [these are] the rations that they are being given, their address, so as to enable a social audit in order to put pressure on the government and hold them accountable.

We feel now that the entire proactive disclosure scheme, which was provided for under the RTI Act, is going to be completely undermined.



To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

SC to hear plea against poll bond scheme next month

The case, which has been pending since 2015, has a new petition challenging a govt. notification allowing the sale of electoral bonds for an additional 15 days in Assembly election years

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine in January a plea to refer to a Constitution Bench petitions accusing the electoral bonds scheme of illegally facilitating anonymous donations to political parties days before polls are due.

A Bench led by Justice B. R. Gavai listed the case for the last week of January 2023.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, requested the court for an urgent hearing, saying the

question of reference to a Constitution Bench could be heard and decided quickly at an early date.

Justice Gavai said the case had been pending since 2015. Mr. Bhushan said the petitioners had made several requests for an early hearing.

The Bench, however, pointed out that there were no elections due in the interregnum before the last week of January even as the petitioners urged it to list the case for the first week of the new year.

Mr. Bhushan submitted there was now an election “every two or three months”.

The case has a new peti-



tion which has challenged a recent government notification allowing the sale of electoral bonds for an additional 15 days in Assembly election years.

This petition has sought the quashing of the November 7 notification issued by the Finance Ministry amending the electoral bonds scheme. “An additional period of 15 days

shall be specified by the Centre in the year of general elections to the Legislative Assembly of States and Union territories with the legislature,” the gazette notification had said.

Earlier, a 30-day extra period for sale was allowed only during Lok Sabha election year.

In October, during a hearing in the case, the Court had asked the government whether the electoral bonds' system revealed the source of money pumped in to fund political parties even as the Centre had repeatedly maintained that the scheme was “absolutely transparent”.

Old is not gold

Old Pension Scheme works as electoral strategy but is imprudent fiscal policy

With the freshly minted Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, reiterating that the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) will be restored by the newly elected Congress-led government, the State would now become the fourth to do so. It is no surprise that the promise of the return of OPS – it guarantees pension at 50% of the last drawn basic pay – boosted the beleaguered party as government employees and retirees form a significant portion of the hilly State's electorate. A Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey supported the fact that awareness (74% of those surveyed) and support for the Congress's promise was high (70%), possibly playing a role in the party pipping the BJP to pole position – there was a single percentage point difference between them. Government staff seem to prefer the scheme as it allows them to avert their contribution of 10% of their basic pay and dearness allowance towards the employee pension funds, as envisaged in the National Pension Scheme (NPS) since inception in 2004. But, concomitantly, reverting to OPS will tax the State's exchequer. Data show that pension payments form nearly 25.6% of States' own tax revenue – 80% for Himachal – but fall to close to a still substantial 12% of the total revenue receipts of States. Along with wages and salaries of government staff, the burden is set to be quite high.

States reverting to OPS can achieve some short-term gains as they need not put up the matching contribution of 10% towards employee pension funds. But with a greying population, the burden of payments will fall on future generations. An argument can be made for enhancing State revenues by further taxation to fund the scheme. The NPS, that has been in place and which allows employees to contribute to their pension corpus from their salaries with matching contribution from the government, is more robust as this corpus is invested through Pension Fund Managers and eases the State's burden. The NPS has built a substantial corpus and subscriber base over time. The Congress-led UPA government had indeed taken forward the pension reforms by the previous NDA regime and this is how the NPS has become relevant over the years. Breaking a consensus on pension reforms and reverting to OPS amounts to an imprudent option as it will only benefit organised government sector employees, increase the fiscal burden of carrying these payments and take up a significant portion of the State's budget, thereby curtailing its outlays on general welfare as a whole. This holds good even if it allows for short-term electoral dividends and caters to those who form the backbone of the government machinery.

Sensex falls 1.4%, rupee slips 27 paise on hawkish U.S. Fed

Federal Reserve startles the market with tone as investors were expecting a softer approach after better-than-expected U.S. inflation numbers, says an analyst; 'rupee still among weakest currencies'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices fell by about 1.3% and the rupee weakened by 27 paise against the U.S. dollar on Thursday after the Federal Reserve raised its policy interest rate by 50 basis points and set a 'hawkish tone', analysts said.

The S&P BSE Sensex slumped 879 points, or 1.4%, to 61,799.03. Sensex stocks that lost the most include TechMahindra (3.98%), Infosys (2.59%), Titan (2.57%), HDFC (2.07%) and ITC (1.87%).

The NSE Nifty 50 index

Slippery slope

Though U.S. inflation has slowed, the Federal Reserve has not swerved from the path of raising rates



■ Recession fears in global economies grow following Fed's comments

■ Dip in IT stocks led to pessimism in the domestic market

■ Demand for dollars remains strong

■ Rupee may trade between 82.25 and 83 in the near term: analyst

too fell 245.40 points, or 1.32%, to 18,414.90 points. "The Fed has startled the market by maintaining its hawkish tone, as investors were expecting a softer ap-

proach after... better-than-expected [U.S.] inflation numbers," said Vinod Nair, head of Research at Geojit Financial. "IT stocks led to pessimism in the domestic

market as recession fears grow in the global economies following the Fed's comments," he said.

The rupee also came under pressure, sliding 27 paise to 82.76 against the dollar. Anindya Banerjee, vice-president, Currency Derivatives & Interest Rate Derivatives at Kotak Securities Ltd., said, "rupee continues to remain one of the weakest currencies as demand for dollars remains strong in the onshore market and lack of exporter selling and carry trades keep supply low".

"Over the near term we expect a range of 82.25-83.00 on spot," he said.



India test-fires Agni-V ballistic missile with 5,000 km range

India on Thursday successfully test-fired nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-V that can strike targets at ranges up to 5,000 km, marking a significant boost to the country's strategic deterrence, people familiar with the development said. The test-firing of the missile from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast comes amid India's lingering border row with China. Agni-V can bring almost the entire Asia including the northernmost part of China and regions in Europe under its striking range. PTI

Curbing air pollution in India needs efforts across South Asia: WB report

Suhasini Haidar

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

India has six large airsheds, some of them shared with Pakistan, between which air pollutants move. While existing measures by the government can reduce particulate matter, significant reduction is possible only if the territories spanning the airsheds implement coordinated policies, says a report by the World Bank made public on Thursday.

Using a modelling approach over South Asia as a whole, the report lays out multiple scenarios and the costs involved in reducing the average South Asian's exposure to particulate matter.

Currently over 60% of South Asians are exposed to an average 35 g/m³ of PM_{2.5} annually. In some parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP) it spiked to as much as 100 g/m³ - nearly 20 times the upper limit of 5 g/m³ recommended by the World Health Organisation, says the World Bank report.



Cause for concern: A car drives past the India Gate amidst heavy smog in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

The six major airsheds in South Asia where air quality in one affected the other were: West/Central IGP that included Punjab (Pakistan), Punjab (India), Haryana, part of Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh; Central/Eastern IGP: Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bangladesh; Middle India: Odisha/Chhattisgarh; Middle India: Eastern Gujarat/Western Maharashtra; Northern/Central Indus River Plain: Pakistan, part of Afghanistan; and Southern Indus Plain and further west: South Pakistan, Western Afghanistan ex-

tending into Eastern Iran.

When the wind direction was predominantly northwest to the southeast, 30% of the air pollution in Indian Punjab came from the Punjab Province in Pakistan and, on average, 30% of the air pollution in the largest cities of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Chittagong, and Khulna) originated in India. In some years, substantial pollution flowed in the other direction across borders.

What this means is that even if Delhi National Capital Territory were to fully implement all air pollution control measures by 2030

while other parts of South Asia continued to follow current policies, it wouldn't keep pollution exposure below 35 g/m³. However if other parts of South Asia also adopted all feasible measures it would bring pollution below that number. "This is also the case with many other cities in South Asia, especially those in the IGP. Accounting for the interdependence in air quality within airsheds in South Asia is necessary when weighing alternative pathways for pollution control," the report noted.

The report analysed multiple scenarios to reduce air pollution with varying degrees of policy implementation and cooperation among countries.

The most cost-effective one, which calls for full coordination between airsheds, would cut the average exposure of PM_{2.5} in South Asia to 30 g/m³ at a cost of \$278 million (₹2,400 crore) per g/m³ of reduced exposure, and save more than 7,50,000 lives annually.

RS discusses effects of global warming and steps to tackle it

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday took up a short duration discussion on the “Serious Effects of Global Warming and the Need for Remedial Steps to Tackle it.” The motion was moved by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam’s (DMK) Tiruchi Siva, Congress’s Pramod Tiwari and Communist Party of India’s (CPI) Santhosh Kumar P.

Opening the discussion, Mr. Siva said that India would be among the seven countries worst-affected by climate change and had to prepare a remedial response for it. The target of the Union government is zero carbon emission status by 2070, but it is the next 20 years that are important and the alarm bells are ringing, he said.

The DMK MP said that Tamil Nadu had announced some policies and would achieve zero carbon emission status by 2027.

Amees Yajnik, Congress MP from Gujarat, called for proper monitoring of industrial pollutants and the modernisation of pollution monitoring systems.

The Trinamool Congress’s Jawhar Sircar said the rising sea levels would impact coastal States the most. Citing the annual cyclones, he said that the only reason Bengal was saved from the invasion of the sea was the mangrove plantations.

“We have pleaded (to the Centre) again and again throughout this year that we need to replant mangrove saplings, there was no reply,” Mr. Sircar said.

China builds ropeway, roads near tri-junction

Beijing has been improving infrastructure and arranging additional deployments along the eastern sector of LAC; officials say there is lot of activity near Doklam that saw face-off in 2017

Suhasini Haidar
Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

China has set up a ropeway near the Torsa Nala on its side of the India-Bhutan-China tri-junction, and is strengthening roads and other infrastructure along the entire eastern sector, according to defence sources.

In the Yangtse area of Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh, which saw a scuffle last week, defence officials with knowledge of the area said China had stepped up patrols some years ago to assert its claims in the area, after finding that their grazers could not move in and out. "What irks the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is that the Indian Army holds



Border woes: Kupup in Sikkim is the closest point to Doklam that saw a face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in 2017.

the dominating heights which give a complete view of the bowl," noted two of the sources.

Yangtse ingress points

The Chinese usually patrol two to three times a year, before and after winter, one of the sources said, adding that there are four major ingress points in the

Yangtse area which the PLA uses to enter the region. Yangtse is located 30-35 km northeast of Tawang and is at an altitude of around 17,000 feet.

The PLA has installed a ropeway close to the Torsa Nala on their side near the confluence point, and some new anchor points of the ropeway have been re-



cently observed, said one of the sources cited above.

Officials said that there is also lot of activity near the Torsa Nala near Doklam, a location that saw a 73-day stand-off between Indian and Chinese forces in 2017.

CONTINUED ON
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China builds ropeway, roads near tri-junction

Citing Intelligence inputs, sources said there has been hectic activity and construction along the eastern sector, especially in the last few months.

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is divided into the western (Ladakh), middle (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), and eastern (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim) sectors. India has also been significantly upgrading its infrastructure along the LAC in the last few years, with further ramping-up post the 2020 stand-off in Galwan.

No activity in Doklam: Bhutan

However, responding to reports of fresh PLA activity at Doklam, Bhutanese officials said there was no such activity “in Doklam”, drawing a distinction between the actual tri-junction that was the flashpoint for the India-China stand-off in 2017, and the wider area. “The information about Chinese activities in Doklam is not correct,” said Bhutan’s Ambassador to India, General Vetsop Namgyal (Retd.), who added that he had checked with the Royal Bhutan Army, and they had confirmed that “there are no Chinese activities in Doklam”.

In 2021, China and Bhutan reached an agreement on a three-step roadmap to resolve their boundary issues, including the Doklam area, after 24 rounds of negotiations that began in 1984.

Differing perception

The Army’s December 12 statement giving details of the scuffle between Indian and Chinese troops on December 9 noted that, in certain areas along the LAC in the Tawang sector, there are areas of differing perception, where both sides patrol the area up to their claim lines. This “has been the trend since 2006,” it said.

India and China have mutually agreed disputed areas and areas of differing perception along the 3,488 km-long LAC. For instance in eastern Ladakh, there are two mutually agreed disputed areas, Trig Heights and Demchok, while there are 10 areas of differing perception. Similarly, Yangtse is one of the eight major friction points in the eastern sector.

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 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
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.
General Studies Paper IV	
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.