



VEDHIK

DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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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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The G-20 can be the UN Security Council alternative

As India begins its presidency of the G-20 (Group of Twenty), there is a certain reluctance on its part to take the bull by the horns and try to end the Russian invasion of Ukraine. India has gone out of its way to say that Ukraine will not be the centrepiece of the G-20 this year. This position is because of the fear of failure, especially because of the position India has taken not to condemn Russia; it is not because the Russian invasion is not the most urgent issue for the world to resolve. But after the G-20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, in November, there is greater understanding of the Indian position – as articulated by U.S. President Joe Biden himself. Considering that the Bali declaration was virtually drafted by India, New Delhi has been recognised as a potential honest broker who may be able to end the devastating war.

The right place and the right time for India

The alphabetical rotation of the G-20 presidency has brought India to the right place at the right time, especially when the world is looking for an alternative to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which has been paralysed by the veto. Most recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the UNSC's credibility hit rock bottom. Any reform of the UNSC, particularly the expansion of its permanent membership, will be strongly resisted by the permanent members and a large majority of the General Assembly because it does not benefit anyone except those who aspire to be permanent members.

Every candidate has a strong opponent waiting to pounce the moment there is any serious proposal to make the candidate country a permanent member. Among the proposals made in the last three decades, there is none that can command the votes of the five permanent members as well as two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly. Although the G-20, which



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The legitimisation of the G-20 as a global arbiter in international affairs will create a multilateral instrument where all members are equal

consists of 19 countries and the European Union (EU), was set up by the G-7 countries in 1999, and upgraded to the level of Heads of State/Government in 2008 to address “major issues related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation and sustainable development”, its composition is such that it looks like it is an expanded Security Council. It is representative of all the significant countries of the 21st century and is balanced between developed and developing countries. The present permanent members and declared aspirants have been included while Africa and Latin America have also been represented. The EU represents a very important segment of the global power structure. A consensus decision of G-20 should be universally acceptable.

The platform of the Bali Declaration

A gradual transformation of the G-20 from an economic body to a political body can be initiated on the basis of the Bali Declaration, which constitutes the consensus in the group on the Russia-Ukraine war. If the G-20 emerges as a peacemaker in Europe, it will attain legitimacy as a group to promote international peace and security; it can gradually become an alternative to the UNSC.

The most important difference will be that no one can prevent its meetings by use of the veto. Care should be taken not to isolate anyone and promote a solution, which is acceptable. Russia will have to reason out its behaviour rather than threaten the use of the veto to intimidate the international community. The grave danger of a permanent member waging a war and vetoing every resolution against it is a reality that the UN should address.

The first step for India to take is to highlight the Bali Declaration and to present a road map during the preparatory process for the G-20 and persuade the sherpas to take it on its agenda. The

response cannot be negative except by Russia as it has to negotiate as an equal with the other members of the G-20. If Russia is looking for an escape route, even Russia will accept India's role as an honest broker in the process. This will enhance India's capacity to deal with the crisis in a formal way within the G-20. It will accomplish India's ultimate goal of securing the reform of the UNSC. Once the basic work is done, the UNSC can formalise the decision and implement it for international peace and security.

Not a new role

Being an honest broker in international peace and security is a role that is not new to India. Although it has taken strong positions on decolonisation and rights of the developing countries to play a role as a leader of the non-aligned world, it kept the conversation going among the protagonists and promoted a balanced outcome. India was the author of several landmark resolutions of the UNSC on the question of Palestine and administered the healing touch whenever confrontation developed in multilateral fora. India was a part of efforts made to prevent the expulsion of Egypt from the Non-Aligned Movement at the Havana summit when the Arabs turned against Egypt.

Flexibility in negotiations even while being principled in its national position gave India a role in many situations. As the President of the G-20, the fund of goodwill that India has earned in the UN will be an asset at this critical moment.

The legitimisation of the G-20 as a global arbiter in international affairs will create a multilateral instrument where all members are equal. Though it may take a very long time for it to replace the UNSC, a beginning will have been made in making the UN an effective instrument in stopping wars and building cooperation. Such an opportunity comes, but rarely in history. It will be worth the effort even if it only plants the seeds for the beginning of a new UNSC.

ILO declaration urges countries to ensure labour protection

A. M. Jigeesh

SINGAPORE

The 17th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organisation (APRM of ILO) set ten-point priorities of national action for the member countries to deal with the issue of dwindling wages of workers, inflation and unemployment.

The “Singapore Declaration”, which was adopted here on Friday agreed that social dialogue was essential to address labour market challenges and finding solutions in crisis situations.

It urged the governments to ensure labour protection for all through the promotion of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining throughout the re-

It calls for measures to increase women’s participation in the labour force and promote equal pay

gions, including for workers in vulnerable situations and workers in the informal economy, as enabling rights for decent work. It called for closing gender gaps in the world of work through measures that increase women’s labour force participation, promote equal pay for work of equal value, balance work and responsibilities, and promoting women’s leadership. The declaration also urged the governments to strengthen governance frameworks and respect for freedom of association to protect the rights of migrant workers.

BJP member moves private Bill on UCC in RS, draws stiff resistance from Opposition

The Bill, introduced by MP Kirodi Lal Meena, was passed through a voice vote; It seeks constitution of a national panel for preparation of Uniform Civil Code and its implementation

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The introduction of a private member Bill by a Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) member on implementation of Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country witnessed vociferous protest from the Opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Friday.

The Opposition members requested the BJP member Kirodi Lal Meena to withdraw the Bill and also asked Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to not accept the legislation as it will destroy the secular fabric of the country.

The Bill seeks constitution of the National Inspection and Investigation Committee for preparation of UCC and its implementation throughout India.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal defended the introduction of the Bill. "I am pained to see the comments made by members quoting (B.R) Ambedkar. It is the legitimate right of a member to raise an issue



It is the legitimate right of a member to raise an issue which is under the directive principles... let this subject be debated in the House

PIYUSH GOYAL
Union Minister

which is under the directive principles of the constitution, let this subject be debated in the House," Mr. Goyal said.

Private members' Bill needs the backing of the government to get passed in the Parliament.

The introduction of the Bill was put for voting and was passed through a voice vote, of 63 votes in favour and 23 against. Many Opposition members from Congress, Trinamool Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) were not present during the discussion and at the time of voting.

Opposing the Bill, MDMK's Vaiko charged at the treasury benches saying "patriotism is not the monopoly of you people."

IUML's Abdul Wahab said the Bill was a deliberate provocation and it cannot be implemented in India.

John Brittas (CPI-M) said the the 21st Law Commission concluded that UCC is neither necessary nor desirable.

"Law Minister should be aware of this, if he takes some time away from attacking the Supreme Court, it is against spirit of the constitution... this is supposed to be an uncivil code, we should not use a piece of legislation for polarisation in society and it is detrimental for the country, please withdraw the bill immediately," he urged the BJP member and the Chair.

Tiruchi Siva (DMK) said the same Bill was listed many times earlier as well but was not introduced after being requested by members.

"This country's base is secularism and federalism, both are at stake now. We foresee what may happen if this private member's Bill is passed. When it is taken up for consideration, they have majority, it will be passed. What will be the mindset of minorities? We should not create apprehension in their minds. During partition, Jinnah asked Muslims to come to Pakistan, but they stayed back, they contributed to the economy and fought for the country. We are really agonised. We are trembling, the whole country will be watching this, consider the future of this country," the DMK member said.

Trinamool Congress' Jawahar Sircar said the Bill is unconstitutional and unethical and was being introduced by an indulgent government to test the waters.

Centre introduces Bills to modify ST list in four States

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The government on Friday introduced four Bills that seek to modify the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list in the four States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in Lok Sabha, via amendments proposed in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.

Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda introduced these Bills in the first half of the day's proceedings in the Lower House. The Bill seeks to add the Narikoravan and Kuruvikkaran hill tribes to the ST list of Tamil Nadu. The demand for their inclusion dates to before 1965 and even the Lokur Committee had in its report of that year recommended its inclusion.

Meeting with Minister

Before introducing the Bill in Lok Sabha, Mr. Munda on Friday morning posted a picture on Twitter, saying that a delegation of Narikoravan and Kuruvikkaran community members met him at his residence to request that their tribes be added to the ST list of their State.

The government also moved a bill to introduce



Arjun Munda

Betta-Kuruba as a synonym for the already categorised Kadu kuruba in the ST list of Karnataka. It also moved a bill to add a number of synonyms in Devanagari script for the already categorised Bhariya Bhumia tribe in the ST list of Chhattisgarh.

The Ministry has said that they are all part of the same tribe but had been kept out of the list just because they pronounced and spelt their names differently.

The Hattee community of Trans-Giri region in Sirmaur district was added to the ST list of Himachal Pradesh—a demand pending for almost five decades.

The BJP has time and again promised to provide ST status to the community and had announced the approval of their addition in September this year, weeks before the dates for the Himachal Pradesh polls were announced.

Collegium's final decisions alone need to be in public domain: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday held that only the final decisions of the top court Collegium need to be published in the public domain.

A “final decision” of the Collegium would mean a resolution drawn and signed by all the Collegium members after due deliberations among them, and post consultations among the other Supreme Court judges, a Bench led by Justice M.R. Shah laid down in a judgment.

The Collegium is composed of the Chief Justice of India and the next four senior-most judges. It unanimously recommends names for Supreme Court and High Court judgeships to the government.

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‘Collegium’s final orders alone need to be shared’

The President then appoints the judges as per Articles 124(2) and 217(1) of the Constitution. “Tentative” decisions of the multi-member Collegium, before the required deliberative and consultative processes are concluded, need not be put in the public domain via publication on the Supreme Court website nor do they come under the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.

Whatever is discussed behind the closed doors of the Collegium would remain confidential. Justice Shah said that this was envisaged in a resolution published by the Collegium in October 2017 when the judicial appointments’ body had decided to publish its resolutions on the court website.

“After due deliberations and discussions and after completing the consultative process, a final decision is taken. When a final decision is taken, the resolution is drawn and signed by the members of the Collegium. Only then can it be said to be a final decision,” Justice Shah pronounced in the judgment. The judgment came on a petition filed by activist Anjali Bhardwaj, who had applied under the RTI Act to the Supreme Court for a copy of the agenda, decision and resolution of a Collegium meeting held on December 12, 2018.

The Supreme Court Public Information Officer (PIO) had said that the information was confidential and that disclosure would amount to contempt of court. The First Appellate Authority and the Central Information Commission found that though “certain decisions” were taken on December 12, the “required consultation” did not take place and hence there was no resolution. In appeal, the Delhi High Court had concluded that the collegium decision was probably “verbal” and did not “crystallise” into a written record to be termed “information” under the RTI Act.

The petitioner had, in turn, referred to a news article which quoted Justice Madan B. Lokur, a former Supreme Court judge, affirming that there was an agenda for the Collegium meeting held on December 12 and that “certain decisions” had indeed been taken then.

Ms. Bhardwaj, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan, further contended that a Collegium resolution published from a subsequent January 10, 2019 meeting had also recorded that “some decisions” were taken in the previous meeting of December 12, 2018, but the intervening winter holidays of the court and the reconstitution of the Collegium had interrupted the consultations.

Mr. Bhushan had also pointed to excerpts in the autobiography of former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi about the December 12 meeting to buttress his case for information to be granted under the RTI Act.

Bill seeks setting up of Commission to curb medical costs

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

As India witnesses a rapid increase in cost of medical treatment, a Bill to provide for the establishment of a National Commission for Controlling Medical Inflation, which would regulate and standardise the rising costs of medicines, diagnostic tests and pathological examinations, was introduced in Rajya Sabha.

The private member's Bill by CPI MP P. Santhosh Kumar seeks to establish a

commission which will consist of a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and five members to be appointed by the President.

“There is an accelerating rate of increase in the price of medicines, pathological diagnosis, hospitalisation and everything related to healthcare,” the Bill says. “Medical inflation is a reality. We do not have any standard rates for tests and medicines. At one hospital, a test can cost ₹50 and at another it can cost ₹100,” Mr. Kumar said.

UGC to announce new framework for UG courses

Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is expected to announce a new credit and curriculum framework for undergraduate programmes which prescribes courses on “understanding India”, modern Indian languages and yoga.

Through the Curriculum and Credit Framework for the Undergraduate Programme (CCFUGP), the UGC aims to implement the recommendations in the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 for making higher education multi-disciplinary.

It will replace the Choice Based Credit System that pre-dates the NEP. The framework is recommendatory and not compulsory in nature. *The Hindu* has viewed the document on the CCFUGP to be made public next week.

Under the course on modern Indian language along with English language, students will be expected to “acquaint themselves with the cultural and intellectual heritage of the chosen MIL and English language.” The value added courses common to all

The framework, which will replace the Choice Based Credit System, is not compulsory in nature

students will include subjects like understanding India, environmental science, digital and technological solutions, health and wellness, yoga education, sports, and fitness.

There will be separate skill enhancement courses aimed at imparting practical skills, hands-on training and soft skills in order to enhance the employability of students. Students will also receive credits for summer internships.

It will allow students multiple entries and exits – completing the first year will fetch a student a certificate, two years will get them a diploma, after three years they will get a bachelor’s degree, and after four years a bachelor’s degree with honours.

Also, students who secure 75% of marks and above in the first six semesters and wish to undertake research at the undergraduate level can choose a research stream in their fourth year.

Anchoring prices

Savers and consumers need to regain confidence that prices will stay stable

The Reserve Bank of India's latest policy statement has unequivocally acknowledged that price stability must remain the primary focus of monetary policy now when, as Governor Shaktikanta Das admitted, "the CPI price momentum remains high". Elucidating the rationale behind the Monetary Policy Committee's decision to raise the benchmark repo rate by 35 basis points to 6.25%, he underlined that the 'battle against inflation was not over' regardless of a moderation in its pace. Retail inflation remains above the 6% upper tolerance mark and is projected to surpass and then ease just below that level in the last two quarters of this fiscal year. The MPC retained its full-year CPI inflation projection at 6.7%, but bumped up the forecasts for Q3 and Q4 by 10 basis points each to 6.6% and 5.9%, respectively, acknowledging that inflation expectations are now well adrift of the MPC's mandated 4% target. Worse, core inflation, or price gains that strip out volatile food and fuel costs, has also stayed stubbornly stuck around the 6% level with price pressures across most of the constituent sub-groups. This is a far from reassuring outlook for price stability, especially when one considers that the resurgent demand across services is likely to trigger price increases when firms begin to pass on higher input costs.

The RBI's policy panel was, however, far from unanimous in its decisions. While one of the six members voted against raising the policy rate, presumably so as to not dampen the as yet tentative economic recovery, two members dissented over the policy stance remaining 'focused on the withdrawal of accommodation'. The majority was, however, emphatic that "further calibrated monetary policy action is warranted to keep inflation expectations anchored, break core inflation persistence and contain second round effects". Anchoring price stability would ultimately serve to 'strengthen medium-term growth prospects', they reasoned. After all, as the RBI's latest Monetary Policy Report observed, 'second-round effects could keep inflation at elevated levels even beyond 8 quarters' and it was therefore imperative to make policy interventions to anchor inflation expectations. Governor Das also pointed out that even after the latest increase, the benchmark interest rate still remains very much 'accommodative' when adjusted for inflation. The RBI's own November round of the consumer confidence survey shows that a significant majority of respondents perceive and expect one year ahead a deterioration in price levels, making this the single biggest drag on consumer sentiment. Ultimately, savers and consumers need to regain confidence that prices will remain stable over a medium term to resume saving and buying to help entrench a durable economic recovery.

'India, China trade deficit is at \$51.5 bn'

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The trade deficit, difference between import and exports, between India and China has touched \$51.5 billion during April-October this fiscal, Parliament was informed on Friday.

The deficit during 2021-22 had jumped to \$73.31 billion as compared to \$44.03 billion in 2020-21,

according to the data provided by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. According to the data, imports during April-October this fiscal stood at \$60.27 billion, while exports aggregated at \$8.77 billion. He said that the merchandise exports from India to China had increased from \$11.93 billion in 2014-15 to \$21.26 billion in 2021-22.

Expand the food safety net without any more delay

The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, through the Public Distribution System (PDS), provides a crucial safety net for roughly 800 million people. Even critics of the PDS appreciated its services during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The humanitarian crisis resulting from the COVID-19 lockdown, made it apparent that too many were still excluded from the PDS. In response to the humanitarian crisis, the Government made one sensible policy decision swiftly. It doubled the entitlements of the 800 million who were already covered by the PDS (from five kilograms per person per month, to 10kg). But that does nothing for those without ration cards.

The exclusion problem

Another obvious solution, also suggested at the time, i.e., to increase population coverage based on population projections, fell on deaf ears. The exclusion problem could be because the NFSA coverage ratios were too low to start with, or due to the 'freeze' in coverage in absolute terms (around 800 million).

PDS coverage is determined by Section 3(2) of the NFSA 2013. It states that the entitlements of eligible households "shall extend up to seventy-five per cent of the rural population and up to fifty per cent. of the urban population." Section 9 of NFSA required that the total number of persons to be covered "shall be calculated on the basis of the population estimates as per the census of which the relevant figures have been published."

Any sensible policy should have an in-built mechanism for updating coverage annually to account for population increase. Between the last Census in 2011 and today, population increase has not been accounted for in determining the number of ration cards. No one could have anticipated that the 2021 Census would be postponed indefinitely. This means that even a decadal update has not happened.

Government inaction led to the matter being taken to the Supreme Court of India in the Problems and Miseries of Migrant Labourers case (Writ petition no. 6 of 2020). On July 21, 2022, the Court agreed that the prayer to increase coverage "seems to be genuine and justified". It directed the Union of India to "come out with a formula and/or appropriate policy/scheme, if any, so that the benefits under NFSA are not restricted as per



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Expanding PDS coverage to account for the increase in population since 2011 is a no-brainer: the Government's resistance to implementing a Supreme Court direction is baffling

the census of 2011 and more and more needy persons/citizens get the benefit under the National Food Security Act". Going further, the Court said that the Government could consider "projection of population increase" to resolve this issue.

A delayed response filed by the Government on October 10, 2022 was, disappointingly, aimed solely at justifying the freeze on PDS coverage under the NFSA. It states that because Section 9 of the NFSA requires that coverage be determined on the basis of the "latest census published...in the wake of unavailability of latest Census data, any change or revision in the number of beneficiaries would necessitate an amendment in the Act".

Sidestepping the Court's suggestion

As mentioned above, the Court had already taken into account the delayed Census and suggested a solution: to use population projections. Official population projections for 2021 are available from the Registrar General of India, but the Government response sidesteps this suggestion.

There was no direction from the Court to change coverage ratios (of 50% in urban and 75% in rural areas), yet the Government response mischievously attempts to divert the discussion towards the fixation of caps. On the basis of NITI Aayog's view, the Government response states that one of the "prime concerns" while fixing the ceiling at the time of enactment of the NFSA was that "as standard of living of people would improve over a period of time, the coverage may be reduced".

In fact, one of the most hotly debated issues on the NFSA in Parliament was that coverage should be universal. Parties such as the Biju Janata Dal and the Communist Party of India and others moved for universal or wider coverage. The Bharatiya Janata Party's Murli Manohar Joshi lamented that it is "half-baked" and not universal in nature.

Never mind inconvenient facts, in making an argument for reducing coverage ratios, the Government affidavit also relies on faulty logic: as per capita income has increased, the vulnerable population "would have gone down considerably". Even schoolchildren know that an increase in the average does not necessarily imply an increase for everyone. There have been several independent reports warning about the rising economic inequality in India.

In its response, the Government attempts repeatedly to shift the blame to State governments. But States are responsible for identifying people for PDS ration cards, once they are given the numbers to be covered by the central government.

On coverage by States

Though it is not a State responsibility, on account of the hardship faced by people, several State governments have used their own resources – this includes poor States such as Chhattisgarh and Odisha – to expand coverage beyond the centrally determined quotas. According to our estimates (Khara and Somanchi), in 2020, there were 809 million NFSA PDS beneficiaries supported by the central government. An additional 90 million people had access to the same (or more) benefits from the PDS as NFSA beneficiaries through their State governments. States were subsidising another 51 million people, but their entitlements were less than those of NFSA beneficiaries.

Reading the Government response, one gets the impression that it was prepared for a school debate rather than a serious policy matter. There is no attempt at understanding or addressing the hardships of people who are deprived of the food security net that the PDS provides.

Robust procurement trends and a comfortable food stocks position are what make an expansion affordable. Adjusting for population increase, as directed by the Supreme Court, will increase coverage by roughly 10% (from 800 million to 900 million).

This is nothing when compared to the doubling of food subsidy resulting from the "double ration" (10 kg per person per month) provision granted as COVID-19 relief to 800 million existing ration card beneficiaries. While the extension of "double rations" doubled the central food subsidy, it helped the Government control the storage problem arising from its ballooning buffer stocks.

Instead of allowing the Government to delay this any further (the matter has been in Court since 2020), the Supreme Court should be firm, directing the Government to get on with apportioning the additional coverage of roughly 100 million across States, so that the States can start identifying new ration card beneficiaries. Poor people should have to not pay the price for the state's failure in conducting the 2021 Census.

Hot test of scramjet engine conducted successfully

The Hindu Bureau

TIRUNELVELI

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) quest to fabricate credible next generation air-breathing scramjet engines, in order to launch satellites in a predetermined orbit at a low cost, crossed a key milestone on Friday evening.

The engine's 11 second-long hot test was conduct-

ed successfully at ISRO's Propulsion Research Complex at Mahendragiri in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu in the presence of ISRO chairman S. Somanath, according to sources.

The scramjet, a more advanced version of the ramjet engine, can operate efficiently at hypersonic speeds. It allows supersonic combustion by breathing oxygen from the at-

mosphere during flight. It then allows the oxygen to mix with hydrogen already stored in the vehicle to trigger combustion, and produce the desired thrust to lift the satellite to its designated orbit. If the engine in the launch vehicle can breathe oxygen from the atmosphere, that will reduce nearly 70% of the propellant that has to be carried in the vehicle.

Form panel to create safeguards: Green Tribunal

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has been directed by the National Green Tribunal to form a three-member panel to formulate safeguards and guidelines to be followed by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs). The NGT gave the order on a petition challenging a notification of the MoEF&CC, through which the ministry had decentralised the environmental clearance process required for a certain category of projects. The notification had given powers to the SEIAAs to grant the clearance instead of the Expert Appraisal Committee of the MoEF&CC.

Three Himalayan medicinal plants enter IUCN Red List



Under threat: *Meizotropis pellita* is 'critically endangered' and *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* (right) is 'endangered'. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Three medicinal plant species found in the Himalayas have made it to IUCN Red List of Threatened Species following a recent assessment. *Meizotropis pellita* has been assessed as 'critically endangered', *Fritillaria cirrhosa* as 'vulnerable', and *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* as 'endangered'.

Meizotropis pellita, commonly known as Patwa, is a perennial shrub with restricted distribution that is endemic to Uttarakhand. "The species is listed as 'critically endangered' based on its limited area of occupancy (less than 10 sq. km)," the study stated. The species is threatened by deforestation, habitat fragmentation and forest fires.

"The essential oil extracted from the leaves possesses strong antioxidants and can be a promising natural substitute for synthetic antioxidants in pharmaceutical industries," it said.

Fritillaria cirrhosa (Himalayan fritillary) is a perennial bulbous herb. "It is reasonable to conclude a

decline of at least 30% of its population over the assessment period (22 to 26 years). Considering the rate of decline, long generation length, poor germination potential, high trade value, extensive harvesting pressure and illegal trade, the species is listed as 'vulnerable,'" it said.

In China, the species is used for the treatment of bronchial disorders and pneumonia. The plant is also a strong cough suppressant, the IUCN assessment said.

The third listed species, *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* (Salampanja), is threatened by habitat loss, livestock grazing, deforestation, and climate change. It is extensively used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and other alternative systems of medicine to cure dysentery, gastritis, chronic fever, cough and stomach aches.

"The assessment of these plants will set our conservation priorities and help protect the species," said Harsh Kumar Chauhan, member, IUCN Species Survival Commission, Medicinal Plant Specialist Group.

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre gets new trisonic wind tunnel

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The new trisonic wind tunnel at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) was inaugurated on Thursday by conducting the first blow-down test successfully. The massive structure, which can perform tests in three speed regimes, equips the Indian Space Research Organisation (IS-

RO) with a robust in-house support system for space missions. For the country as a whole, it is a big step towards self-reliance in the aerospace sector, the VSSC says.

Wind tunnels are devices used to study the effects of air flows on solid objects – in this case, scale models of ISRO rockets and spacecraft. The trisonic wind tunnel at VSSC is about 160

metres long and measures 5.4 metres at its widest part.

In a 'blow down test', stored gases are released and blown through the tunnel's test section, simulating flight conditions. The tunnel can simulate flight conditions from 0.2 times the speed of sound to four times the speed of sound, according to the space agency.

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.