

## ● POLITY

## ● ECONOMICS

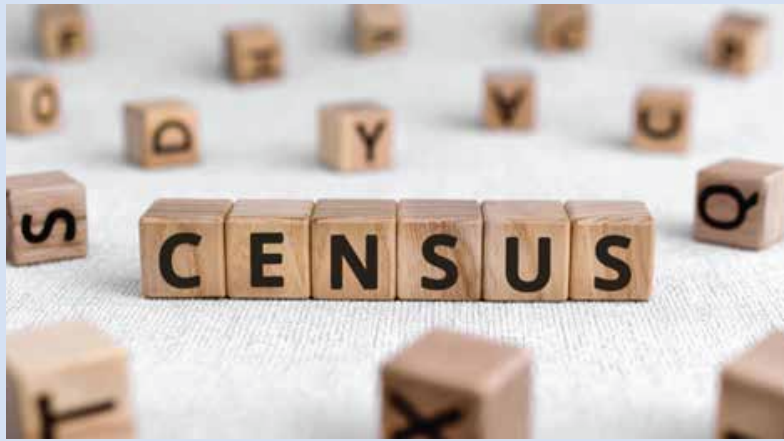
## ● TECHNOLOGY

## ● ECOLOGY

## INDIAN SOCIETY

## Conduct caste survey, review Agnipath scheme: JD(U) to BJP

**CONTEXT:** Amid meetings being held by National Democratic Alliance partners to form a government, two allies of the BJP said on Thursday that the new government should review the Agni-path scheme for short-term recruitments to the armed forces.



### SECC (Socio-Economic and Caste Census)

SECC was first conducted in 1931 which aimed to collect information on the economic status of Indian families, both in rural and urban areas, to identify indicators of deprivation.

It also collects data on specific caste names to evaluate the economic conditions of different caste groups.

### Difference Between Census & SECC:

Census provides a general portrait of the Indian population, while SECC is used to identify beneficiaries of state support.

Census data is confidential under the Census Act of 1948, while personal information in SECC is open for use by government departments to grant or restrict benefits to households.

### The History of Caste-based Data Collection in India:

Caste-based data collection has a long history in India, with information on castes being included upto 1931.

Post 1951, the decision to stop collecting caste data was made to move away from a divisive approach and promote national unity.

However, with changing socio-political dynamics and the need for accurate information, there has been a renewed call for a caste census.

### What is the Agnipath Scheme?

It allows patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years.

Under this scheme, the youth joining the army will be called Agniveer. Youth will be able to be recruited into the army for

a short duration.

Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually, and most will leave the service in just four years.

However, after four years, only 25% of the batch will be recruited back into their respective services, for a period of 15 years.

### Objectives

It aims at providing an opportunity to the patriotic and motivated youth with the 'Josh' and 'Jazba' to join the Armed Forces.

It is expected to bring down the average age profile of the Indian Armed Forces by about 4 to 5 years.

The scheme envisions that, the average age in the forces is 32 years today, which will go down to 26 in six to seven years.

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## NHRC seeks report on Nata Pratha practice

**CONTEXT:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued notice on Thursday to the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development and the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat over a practice known as Nata Pratha.

The girls in some communities of these States are sold either on stamp paper or otherwise in the name of illegal or child marriage, mostly by their own families. Given the immoral consequences, the Commission has called for its eradication and abolition.



### Nata Pratha

Nata Pratha is mainly practiced by the Bhil tribe, one of the largest tribes in South Asia. Traditionally, both the man and the woman who enter into a relationship are supposed to be married or have been widowed, but the

custom has evolved to include single people as well. The word "Nata" means relationship. Under this system, no formal marriage ceremony is required to live together. Couple can perform all obligations of husband and wife without entering into wedlock.

According to the practice, man has to pay money to live — a la modern day live-in relationship — with a woman of his choice, after the woman's first husband walks out of the marriage and pass on his wife to other man in return for money. This money, the "bride price," is fixed by members of the community, or middlemen, who may receive a cut for doing so.

### National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

It ensures the protection of rights related to life, liberty,

equality, and dignity of individuals.

Rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and international covenants enforceable by Indian courts.

#### Establishment

Established on 12th October 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.

Amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006, and Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Established in conformity with the Paris Principles, adopted for promoting and protecting human rights.

#### Composition

The Commission consists of a chairperson, five full-time Members and seven deemed Members.

Chairman is a former Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge.

#### Appointment and Tenure:

Chairman and members appointed by the President on the recommendations of a six-member committee.

The committee consists of the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, and the Union Home Minister.

The chairman and members hold office for a term of three years or until they reach the age of 70.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### Cooperation with India to see manifold increase, says Norwegian Ambassador

**CONTEXT:** Norwegian businesses are showing a lot of interest in India and a manifold increase in cooperation between the two countries is expected in the next 10 years, May-Elin Stener, Ambassador of Norway to India, said on Thursday.

Further, the Ambassador said Norway is keen on three sectors — renewable energy, maritime and circular economy. A conference on marine environment and circular economy in Chennai has been scheduled on Friday, which will focus on shores, rivers and other ecosystems and how to preserve the environment, she said. The conference will bring together diverse stakeholders to take forward environmental issues.



### What is the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)?

#### About:

It is an intergovernmental organization set up for the promotion of free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four Member States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – and the benefit of their trading partners around the globe.

#### History

It was established by a Convention signed in Stockholm on 4th January 1960.

It aimed to serve as an alternative trade bloc for those European states that were unable or unwilling to join the then European Economic Community (EEC), the main predecessor of the European Union (EU).

#### Main Tasks of the Association:

Maintaining and developing the EFTA Convention, which regulates economic relations between the four EFTA States.

Managing the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement), which brings together the Member States of the European Union and three of the EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – in a single market, also referred to as the “Internal Market”.

#### India and EFTA:

India's exports to EFTA countries during 2022-23 stood at USD 1.92 billion, while imports were at USD 16.74 billion.

The bilateral trade between India and EFTA stood at USD 18.65 billion in 2022-23.

Switzerland is the largest trading partner of India followed by Norway.

In fact, India has a trade deficit with Switzerland, largely due to gold imports.

India-European Free Trade Association signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) in March 2024.



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## ENVIRONMENT

## India must spend up to \$385 bn for RE goal

**CONTEXT:** India will have to invest as much as \$385 billion to meet its target of 500 giga-watts (GW) of renewable energy (RE) by 2030, but coal will remain a key source of electricity generation for the next decade, Moody's Ratings said.

India, a major green-house gas emitter, said it aims to ramp up non-fossil fuel capacity set by 50 GW each year to help meet 500 GW target. It missed its target of 175 GW by 2022.

### Renewable Energy Capacity in India

India, a country with a rapidly growing economy and increasing energy demands, has made significant strides in its renewable energy sector. It added 18.48 GW of renewable energy capacity in the fiscal year 2023-24, which is over 21% higher than the 15.27 GW added a year ago.

It was primarily driven by solar installations (12.78 GW) and wind energy (2.27 GW).

The total installed renewable energy capacity has increased from 76.37 GW in 2014 to 178.98 GW in October 2023, marking an increase of around 2.34 times.



### Challenges Of Renewable Energy

**High Upfront Costs:** One of the most significant challenges of renewable energy is the high upfront costs associated with the installation of renewable energy technologies.

While renewable energy sources like solar and wind power save money in the long run, the initial setup costs can be prohibitive. It is particularly true in developing countries, where the cost of borrowing is high.

**Infrastructure and Technical Challenges:** Renewable energy technologies require specific infrastructure and technical expertise.

For instance, solar and wind energy systems require extensive land use, which can lead to conflicts over land rights. Additionally, these systems require regular maintenance and skilled technicians for installation and repair.

**Variability and Intermittency:** The variability and intermittency of renewable energy sources pose significant challenges.

Solar and wind power, for instance, are dependent on weather conditions and time of day, making them less reliable than

traditional energy sources. It necessitates the development of energy storage systems and grid infrastructure capable of managing these fluctuations.

## ECONOMY

## SEBI issues framework for surveillance lapse penalty

**CONTEXT:** SEBI came out with a framework on "financial disincentives" for market infrastructure institutions (MII) that would impose a penalty ranging from ₹1 lakh to ₹1 crore for each instance of surveillance lapse during the financial year.

Market surveillance by MIIs include monitoring the day-to-day activities in the markets, including trading, margining, settlement, de-mat transactions. Surveillance lapse includes any lapse observed in discharge of surveillance activities, inadequate reporting or non-reporting of surveillance-related activity as per agreed timeline.



### What are MIIs?

Stock exchanges, depositories and clearing houses are all Market Infrastructure Institutions and constitute a key part of the nation's vital economic infrastructure.

According to a panel set up (in 2010) under the chairmanship of former Reserve Bank of India Governor Bimal Jalan, the term 'market infrastructure' denotes such fundamental facilities and systems serving this capital market.

The primary purpose of the securities /capital market is to enable allocation/reallocation of capital/financial resources.

MIIs helps in optimal use of money in the economy and fostered economic development.

They constitute the nucleus of the capital allocation system and are indispensable for economic growth and have a net positive effect on society like any other infrastructure institution.

### What is SEBI?

SEBI is a statutory body established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

The basic functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote and regulate the securities market.

Before SEBI came into existence, Controller of Capital

Issues was the regulatory authority; it derived authority from the Capital Issues (Control) Act, 1947.

In April, 1988 the SEBI was constituted as the regulator of capital markets in India under a resolution of the Government of India.

Initially SEBI was a non statutory body without any statutory power.

It became autonomous and given statutory powers by SEBI Act 1992.

The headquarters of SEBI is situated in Mumbai. The regional offices of SEBI are located in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### First fatal human case of H5N2 bird flu identified

**CONTEXT:** The World Health Organization said on Wednesday a person in Mexico had died in the first confirmed human case globally of infection with the H5N2 variant of bird flu.

The patient, who died on April 24 after developing fever, shortness of breath, diarrhoea, and nausea, had “no history of exposure to poultry or other animals”, and “multiple underlying medical conditions”, the WHO said.



#### About H5N2 Bird flu:

H5N2 is a subtype of the Avian Influenza A virus. Influenza A viruses are categorised by subtypes based on the proteins on their surfaces.

There are 18 different hemagglutinin (H) and 11 different neuraminidase (N) subtypes, including H5N2.

Hemagglutinin is a glycoprotein found on the surface of influenza viruses and neuraminidase is an enzyme found on the surface of the viruses that enable them to be released from the host cell.

H5N2 has been first reported in poultry in Mexico.

#### Reasons Behind Spread:

While specific reasons for large-scale outbreaks of H5N2 are not well-established, factors like migratory bird patterns and interactions with domestic birds contribute to its spread.

Changes in environmental conditions, similar to those

affecting H5N1, could influence the spread of H5N2 by altering bird migratory routes and behaviours.

**Spread of H5N2 to Humans:** Although human infections with H5N2 are rare, the potential for the virus to mutate and become more easily transmissible between humans while retaining its severity poses a significant public health risk.

**Diagnosis:** The disease is diagnosed using molecular methods like Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR).

**Treatment:** Antiviral drugs, notably neuraminidase inhibitors (oseltamivir, zanamivir) can reduce the duration of viral replication.

## GEOGRAPHY

### Food price rise likely sped up in May'

**CONTEXT:** Food inflation may have hardened in May, as the average cost of a home-cooked vegetarian meal rose 9%, compared with April's 8%, to hit a four-month high. Tomato, onion and potato prices surged about 40%, while inflation in rice and pulses held firm, CRISIL's food costs tracker shows.

Food inflation, as measured by the official retail price rise gauge — the Consumer Price Index (CPI), had sped to a four-month high of 8.7% in April from 8.5% in March, with rural consumers witnessing a sharper uptick of 8.75%. Overall retail inflation stood at 4.83% in April. The National Statistical Office will release CPI numbers for May on June 12.



#### About Retail Inflation

Retail inflation, also known as Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation, tracks the change in retail prices of goods and services which households purchase for their daily consumption.

CPI is calculated for a fixed basket of goods and services that may or may not be altered by the government from time to time.

#### How is CPI calculated?

CPI is calculated as a percentage. It is a comparison of the general price level in the markets in a particular time period from a time frame in the past. This is known as the base year.

CPI, therefore, is calculated by referring to a base year, which is a benchmark. Currently, the base year is 2012.

#### The formula for calculating the CPI index is:

$$\text{CPI} = \frac{\text{Cost of a Fixed Basket of Goods and Services in the Current Year}}{\text{Cost of a Fixed Basket of Goods and Services in the Base Year}} \times 100$$

Base Year) \* 100

The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), compiles All India as well as state-wise CPI for Rural, Urban, Combined sectors and releases the CPI numbers every month.

#### How is the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Used?

It is used as a macroeconomic indicator of inflation, as a tool by the central bank and government for inflation targeting and for inspecting price stability, and as a deflator in the national accounts.

CPI also helps understand the real value of salaries, wages, and pensions, the purchasing power of the nation's currency, and regulating rates.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### Azerbaijan to host 29th climate meet

**CONTEXT:** The annual climate conference to be held here in November will lay particular stress on “peace” and “truce” to enable countries to focus on climate solution amid ongoing conflicts, a top adviser to the Azerbaijan government said at a media briefing this week.



The 29th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP) — as the climate conference is called — is set to further agenda points decided in the 28th edition in Dubai such as a firm commitment to “transition away from the use of fossil fuels... in a just, orderly and equitable manner, and accelerating action in this critical decade, to achieve net zero by 2050.”

## United Nations Framework Convention for Climatic Change

The UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change) is the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. UNFCCC stands for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The UNFCCC, signed in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development also known as the Earth Summit, the Rio Summit or the Rio Conference The UNFCCC entered into force on March 21, 1994.

The Convention has near universal membership (197 Parties) and is the parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The original secretariat was in Geneva. Since 1996, the secretariat has been located in Bonn, Germany.

#### What are the Shortcomings within UNFCCC?

- **Non-inclusive:** Most scientists agree the most dangerous environmental air pollutants today are microscopic particulates that come from car engines and combustion-based power plants, but these pollutants are largely ignored by the Kyoto Protocol.
- **Slow progress:** It took a long time for COP to bring Russia to agree into participating in the Kyoto Protocol. (until 2005)
- UNFCCC failed to persuade USA to ratify the Kyoto protocol thereby keeping one of the largest emitter of greenhouse gases away from commitments.
- **Unsustainable targets:** The world reached at almost 1degree Celsius warming post industrialization and the Paris contributions are not enough to maintain 2 degree Celsius levels.
- **Unsatisfactory Response:** Many countries argued for a tougher target of 1.5C - including leaders of low-lying countries that face unsustainable sea levels rises in a warming world



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