



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 Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

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

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Peace, tranquillity essential, Jaishankar tells Chinese envoy

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

In a meeting with the outgoing Chinese envoy, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday emphasised mutual “respect, sensitivity and interest”.

“Emphasised that the development of India-China relations is guided by the three mutuals. Peace and tranquillity in the border areas is essential. The normalisation of India-China relations is in the interest of both countries, of Asia and the world at large,” said Mr. Jaishankar in a farewell meeting with Ambassador Sun Weidong.

The meeting appears to reiterate the statement that Mr. Jaishankar made ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’s (SCO’s) Samarkand summit that took place last month. India had recognised the mutual disengagement from Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area of eastern Ladakh as a positive step. But while meeting the media on September 14, Mr. Jaishankar had described the develop-



S. Jaishankar

ment as “one problem less”.

Mr. Jaishankar’s comment in that context was interpreted as a hint towards the remaining friction points at the Line of Actual Control that are yet to be resolved. Mr. Sun’s three-year tenure which began in 2019 coincided with the Galwan crisis of June 2020 and the subsequent prolonged military tension. The tension was reduced earlier after the Indian and Chinese troops disengaged from PP17A, Galwan and both banks of Pangong Tso, but from the Indian point of view, the resolution is yet to be attained at Demchok and Depsang.

No side should resort to nuclear option, Rajnath tells Shoigu

Russian Defence Minister briefs his Indian counterpart on 'deteriorating' Ukraine situation; they also discuss bilateral defence cooperation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu briefed his Indian counterpart, Rajnath Singh, on the evolving situation in Ukraine, including his concerns about possible provocations through the use of 'dirty bomb', during a telephone conversation on Wednesday. Mr. Singh stressed that nuclear option should not be resorted to by any side.

"Mr. Singh reiterated India's position on the need to pursue the path of dialogue and diplomacy for an early resolution of the conflict. He pointed out that the nuclear option should not be resorted to by any side as the prospect of the usage of nuclear or radiological weapons goes against the basic tenets of humanity," a Defence Ministry statement said.

Stating that the tele-



Friendly talk: Rajnath Singh with Sergei Shoigu at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan in New Delhi in December 2021. PTI

phone conversation was held at the request of Mr. Shoigu, the statement said added that during the teleconference, both Ministers discussed bilateral defence cooperation as well as the "deteriorating" situation in Ukraine.

Both Ministers agreed to remain in touch, the statement added. Earlier this month, in a telephone conversation with Ukraine Pre-

sident Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that there can be no military solution to the conflict and also emphasised India's readiness to contribute to any peace effort. "The PM emphasised the importance India attaches to the safety and security of nuclear installations, including in Ukraine," an official statement said.

Panel studying child marriage Bill gets time to file report

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

With discussions on the controversial Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 still pending, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar has given a third extension to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports which is studying the Bill.

The Bill was first referred to the panel in December 2021. It has received an extension of three months. It has so far spoken to a host of stakeholders, including NGOs and religious bodies who had expressed reservations about the Bill.

The panel was to submit its report by the last Monsoon Session but could not do so because its Chairperson, Vinay Sahasrabudhe, retired and his replacement was not found. According to sources, the discussions are nowhere close to the closing stage.

Committed to users, reviewing CCI order for next steps: Google

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A day after the Competition Commission of India (CCI) slapped a penalty of ₹936.44 crore on Google, the company on Wednesday said it was reviewing the decision to evaluate the next steps.

“Indian developers have benefited from the technology, security, consumer protections, and unrivalled choice and flexibility that Android and Google Play provide. And, by keeping costs low, our model has powered India’s digital transformation,” a Google spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added, “We remain committed to our users and developers and are reviewing

the decision to evaluate the next steps.”

The CCI on Tuesday imposed a penalty of ₹936.44 crore on Google for “abusing its dominant position with respect to its Play Store policies”. The anti-trust regulator on October 20 slapped a fine of ₹1,337.76 crore on Google for abusing its dominant position in multiple markets in the Android mobile device ecosystem.

Google requires application developers to use GPBS not only for receiving payments for apps distributed through the Play Store but also for certain purchases made by users. The CCI termed this policy “one-sided” and “arbitrary and devoid of any legitimate business interest”.

The FM's call for industrial investment

Why did the Union Finance Minister urge industry giants to invest in manufacturing? Is private sector financing at an all-time low? Has government intervention to boost and spend aggressively on infrastructure come at an opportune time?

EXPLAINER

K. Bharat Kumar

The story so far:

Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked captains of industry what was holding them back from investing in manufacturing. She likened industry to Lord Hanuman from the Ramayana by stating that industry did not realise its own strength and that it should forge ahead with confidence. She said, "This is the time for India... We cannot miss the bus".

Why did she urge them thus?

Clearly, the Finance Minister did not see investments happening at a pace she would have liked. In the hope of revitalising private investment, the government had in September 2019 cut the tax rate for domestic companies from 30% to 22% if they stopped availing of any other tax SOP (standard operating procedure).

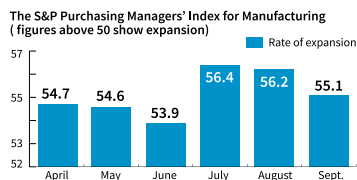
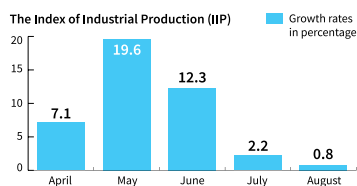
Niranjan Rajadhyaksha, CEO of Artha Global, says that Indian private sector investment has been weak for almost a decade now. "If we look at drivers of economic growth right now, there are amber lights flashing. The export story will be under threat because of the global slowdown, the government's ability to support domestic demand would also be limited as the fiscal deficit comes down. Because of the K-shaped recovery, private consumption is only concentrated in some parts of the income pyramid."

What is the current scenario?

Let's look at some indicators over the past few months; generally, changes in numbers are with respect to year-earlier figures, but when we have been through something as sudden and life-changing as a pandemic for at least two years, it is useful to see how figures from quarter to quarter or month to month have changed. This gives us an idea of how well or poorly we are recovering. In the GDP figures for the quarter ended June, gross fixed capital for-

In fits and starts

These charts show how industrial production has grown this fiscal year starting April



mation (GFCF) at 2011-12 prices rose 9.6% to ₹12.77 lakh crore, from ₹11.66 lakh crore in Q1 of FY20, which was the pre-pandemic period. This is in context of the overall GDP growth of 2.8% to ₹36.85 lakh crore in Q1 FY23 from ₹35.85 lakh crore in Q1 of FY20. Manufacturing GVA (gross value added) also rose 6.5% to ₹6,05,104 in Q1 FY23 from ₹5,68,104 in Q1, FY20. However, when one observes manufacturing growth from the immediately preceding quarter April-June vs January-March, we see that the sector has suffered a 10.5% contraction. While private final consumption expenditure, an essential pillar of our economy, climbed 26% year-on-year for the June quarter, the ₹22.08 lakh crore of private spending in April-June 2022 was a significant ₹54,000 crore, or 2.4%, less than that spent in the preceding quarter. And GFCF, which is viewed as a proxy for private investment, shrank quarter-on-quarter by 6.8%.

Industrial production has shown

growth in each of the first five months of this fiscal year starting April, compared with a year earlier; but worryingly, monthly numbers as seen on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and the S&P Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for Manufacturing have progressed in fits and starts. In an article in *The Hindu*, Pulapre Balakrishnan, argued that capital expenditure by the government is a precursor to private investment but that it would take a sustained trend in public spending, for about half a decade at least, to help kindle enthusiasm in the private sector. While the government's intent to spend aggressively on infrastructure in its Budget for this fiscal is encouraging, he says this cycle should have started a few years ago. With the government having now announced intent, he says it must now focus on a couple of priorities; one that it must identify the right projects – investments must be made in productivity-enhancing infrastructure. Two, he warns that inflation

could derail the best designed public spending programmes, and urges a step up in agricultural produce to help rein in food inflation.

What is happening to demand?

Private companies invest when they are able to estimate profits, and that comes from demand. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) consumer sentiment index is still below pre-pandemic levels but is far higher than what was seen 12-18 months ago. RBI's Monetary policy report dated September 30 says, "Data for Q2 [ended Sept] indicate that aggregate demand remained buoyant, supported by the ongoing recovery in private consumption and investment demand." It shows that seasonally adjusted capacity utilisation rose to 74.3% in Q1 – the highest in the last three years.

And this, along with household savings intentions remaining high, might hold the key to the investment cycle kicking in.

THE GIST

Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked captains of industry what was holding them back from investing in manufacturing. She said that, "This is the time for India... We cannot miss the bus".

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Why did the market regulator fine Bombay Dyeing?

Why is the real-estate vertical of the textile company under fire from the Securities and Exchange Board of India? What are the main allegations against the company?

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

On October 22, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) barred ten entities, including The Bombay Dyeing & Manufacturing Company Ltd (BDMCL) and its promoters Nusli Wadia, Ness Wadia and Jehangir Wadia from trading in the securities market for a period of two years. This was on account of alleged financial misrepresentation made by the entities with respect to their real-estate business. The market regulator also imposed a fine of ₹15.75 crore on the entities.

What happened?

Bombay Dyeing has three verticals – home textiles, real-estate and polyester staple fibre (PSF). The investigation concerned their management of

real-estate operations. The Wadia Group Company, Scal Services Ltd was engaged in the business of real-estate and trading. In February 2019, Scal's real estate business was demerged and vested into the BDMCL. It was in March 2012 that BDMCL had sold a 30% stake in Scal – reducing its individual shareholding in the company to 19%.

SEBI's conclusions are thus inter-related. Firstly, it found BDMCL guilty of abetting a scheme that would fall short of recognising Scal as an 'associate' and secondly, of using the premise of an indirect ownership scheme to incorrectly project profits. Accounting Standard-23 (or AS-23) requires a company to recognise its investments in an associate in order to ensure transparency for a retail investor who might invest in their company. Unless specifically established, an entity is to be categorised as an

'associate' to the main entity should the latter hold 20% or more shareholding in the former. As previously stated, BDMCL kept it at 19%, thus, allegedly escaping the necessity for regulatory disclosures. SEBI noted that Wadia Group's other companies held the remaining shareholding of Scal.

To summarise, the regulator observed that BDMCL directly or indirectly held the entire share capital of all the entities which held share capital in Scal.

How was it to be executed?

In a nutshell, the scheme entailed BDMCL selling flats and allotment rights to Scal (whose ownership was allegedly retained by the group) and ensuring that it continued to recognise the revenues based on certain Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs), irrespective of whether or not the properties were

further sold to retail customers by Scal. In other words, BDMCL could tell investors about having made a sale wherein in fact, it was allegedly just passing it on to an 'in-house' entity. The agreements recognised Scal as a 'bulk purchaser', and as per the formulated model, it was required to sell these apartments to retail customers and make payments to BDMCL. However, as noted by the regulator, while BDMCL recognised the sales made to Scal in its financial statements, this was not the case with Scal. The latter only recorded the difference between sales and purchase of flats, similar to a commission. Thus, SEBI concluded that Scal was "acting as an agent of BDMCL rather than acting on principal-to-principal basis".

What were the consequences?

The regulator noted that had the financial statements of Scal been consolidated (with the main company), the inter se sales of flats from BDMCL to SCAL would not have been accounted for and therefore the 'sales' and 'profit' figures of BDMCL would have been reduced. As per SEBI, BDMCL was able to inflate its sales by ₹2,492.94 crore and consequently profit by ₹1,302 crore between FY 2011-12 to FY 2017-18. Thus, it was able to present itself as a profit-making enterprise.

This, advertently, helped maintain its share price.

THE GIST

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An unkind hike

Amid sticky inflation, small savings rates should have been pegged higher

The Government recently increased the returns on a handful of small savings instruments for the ongoing October to December quarter by 0.1 to 0.3 percentage points. Popular investment avenues for the middle class such as the Public Provident Fund (PPF) and the National Savings Certificate were left out. On paper, the returns on these instruments are to be reset on a market-determined basis, with a spread of 0 to 100 basis points (one basis point equals 0.01%) over the yields on government securities with comparable maturities. That this has not been adhered to is evident even at a cursory glance, given the long pause between rate changes. Following interest rate hikes this year to curb inflation, government securities' yields have been shooting up. This month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that interest rates offered on various schemes in the current quarter are 44 to 77 basis points below the formula-implied rates. The PPF, for instance, should have been earning 7.72% this quarter instead of the 7.1% accruing now. It is noteworthy that the central bank, which usually publishes the formula-based small savings rates every month or two, had not spelt them out from May to September, although it did note in August that the spread between current rates and the formula-based rates had turned 'negative for most' schemes.

For households that have been grappling with 6%-plus inflation since January, punctuated by a few months of 7%-plus price rise, these meagre hikes are far from enough to lift sentiment. Bear in mind that this was the first change in these schemes' rates in 27 months – after a sharp cut in the range of 0.5 and 1.4 percentage points across schemes introduced in April 2020. That political considerations still determine the trajectory of small savers' nest-egg sizes can be gauged by the few recent occasions when rates were changed, or rolled back. The last time rates were hiked was in January 2019, just ahead of the Lok Sabha election. In March 2021, the Government had announced further cuts ranging from 0.4% to 1.1%, but withdrew the decision overnight, citing an 'oversight' amid a poll campaign for five States. However, even as a token gesture to voters in upcoming polls, this latest tweak in small savings rates does not make the cut. As the RBI's top brass warned earlier, negative returns have serious consequences for the economy if households, which are the biggest lenders, stop parking their savings in such fixed income instruments and banks. The next quarter should see a fairer and healthier reset of returns to negate inflation's dent on household savings.

Central banks must keep raising rates till 'neutral' level: IMF MD

Reuters

BERLIN

International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva said that central banks should keep raising interest rates further to fight inflation until they hit a 'neutral' level, though in most cases they have not reached this point.

Speaking to Reuters a day before the European Central Bank is widely expected to raise rates by 75 basis points, she said it would take until 2024 for the positive effect of raising rates globally to be felt.

The ECB had for months said that its first step will be to raise rates to a neutral setting, where it was neither driving nor restricting growth, but some policymakers are now advocating more aggressive action to tame inflation.

"At this point, we look for getting to a neutral mode, and in most places we are not quite yet there."

Central banks have to raise rates because 'when inflation runs high, that undermines growth, it hits the poorest parts of the population the hardest.'

Recent rate hikes by the ECB have come in the backdrop of a deteriorating economic outlook and inflation that hit 9.9% in the Euro zone in September, driven by soaring food and energy prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

On how long she expected central banks to keep raising rates, she said the IMF projected 'by 2024 to get to a point when central banks are seeing the impact of their actions.'

LIC nudged to tweak plans to boost profit

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The government is nudging LIC to tweak its product strategy to maximise profitability in a bid to help India's largest insurer realise its full growth potential and yield better returns for investors, an official said.

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has been trading below the issue price of ₹949 a share ever since it got listed on stock exchanges on May 17. It listed at ₹872 apiece on the NSE.

On Tuesday, the scrip settled at ₹595.50, down



0.72% from the previous close.

The Finance Ministry, in its performance review, has been sensitising the LIC management about the steps that could be taken to better investor wealth and focus on non-participating products or term plans to improve profitability.

EV firms weigh battery-swapping impact on innovation

CHARGE OR SWAP?

Yuthika Bhargava
NEW DELHI

The auto industry appears divided over the impact of EV battery swapping on innovation.

While battery swapping – where discharged vehicle batteries can be instantly exchanged for charged units – is expected to tackle hurdles such as high vehicle cost and long charging time, some experts said this could only be lever-

aged up to a certain limit and was not a complete solution to push electric vehicle (EV) adoption. The concerns come at a time when the Centre is likely to announce its policy on battery swapping in electric two- and three-wheelers, almost six months after the draft was released.

‘Huge’ standardisation Swapping, in its current form, will require a great deal of battery standardisation, which, many in the industry feel may not leave room for innovation and



Current concerns: The new policy may not push electric vehicle adoption, say experts. KAMAL NARANG

would curb investments.

“When the policy [draft] came, there was huge objection... the policy

[spurred] discussions on standardisation in batteries such that a customer should be able to go to any

swapping station, as in the case of ATMs,” Sohinder Gill, CEO, Hero Electric, said. “This means huge standardisation of swapping stations in terms of size, technology and back-end.”

While industry officials welcomed the aim of the policy, they highlighted concerns such as accountability for a sub-optimal battery brought in to a swapping station or if it caught fire.

Siddharth Kabra, co-Founder & CEO at VoltUp, said battery swapping had

reduced initial investments by EV owners. The solution was a boon for last-mile [e-commerce] delivery agents as it empowered them to drive longer while lowering the cost of fuel.

“Battery swapping takes around a minute and thus, eliminates the larger problem of parking space which is a prerequisite in the case of charging.”

According to an industry expert who did not want to be named, the draft policy lacks clarity on interoperability and accountability.

GEAC gives its nod for commercial cultivation of GM mustard yet again

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) that functions under the Union Environment Ministry has yet again cleared the proposal for commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) mustard. Though the GEAC cleared the proposal in 2017, the Ministry vetoed it and suggested that the panel hold more studies on the GM crop.

The GEAC had gone through the details submitted by the applicant, Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP), and gave necessary approvals for the cultivation of GM mustard. This will be the second GM crop after GM cotton that



Second thought: The panel first cleared the proposal for commercial cultivation of GM mustard in 2017. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

can be commercially cultivated in the country now.

A GEAC meeting held on October 18 allowed the environmental release of two varieties of genetically engineered mustard, so that it can be used for developing new parental lines and hybrids under the supervision of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research

(ICAR). “The environmental release of mustard hybrid Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH-11) for its seed production and testing as per existing ICAR guidelines and other extant rules/regulations prior to commercial release,” the minutes of the meeting said.

Considering the application of the CGMCP, the

GEAC also set certain conditions for the clearance. It includes that the approval is for a limited period of four years and is renewable for two years at a time based on compliance report. External experts will visit the growing sites of the crop at least once during each season.

The applicant should also develop and deposit the DNA fingerprints of the approved varieties to the ICAR.

Activists questioned the decision of the GEAC. Kavitha Kuruganti of the Coalition for a GM-Free India warned the Centre against any such approval. She reminded Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav that he himself had written against GM crops earlier.

ISRO to boost NavIC, widen user base of location system

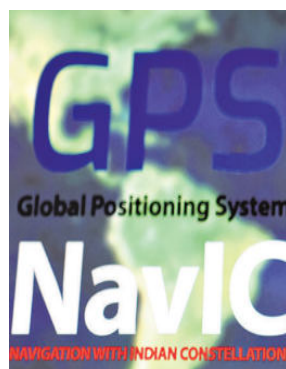
Space agency chief says plans afoot to give it a global reach; increase the number of satellites; add bandwidth most used for civilian navigational use; and strengthen the safety of signals

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is working on a series of improvements to NavIC, or India's equivalent of the Global Positioning System (GPS), so that more people are motivated to install and use it. Plans are also afoot to give it a global reach, S Somanath, ISRO Chairman, said on the sidelines of the India Space Conference on Wednesday.

NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation), or the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), is a constellation



NavIC system is not widely in use in India because mobile phones are not compatible.

of seven satellites akin to the U.S. GPS, the European Galileo and the Russian GLONASS, and can be used to track location.

Though available for use in mainland India and within 1,500 km around it,

the system is not in wide regular use in India primarily because mobile phones have not been made compatible to process its signals. The Indian government has been pressing manufacturers to add compatibility and has set a deadline of January 2023, but media reports suggest this is unlikely before 2025.

Mr. Somanath told *The Hindu* that adding the L1 band into NavIC would be a major change. This bandwidth is part of the GPS and is the most used for civilian navigational use. "Currently NavIC is only compatible with the L5 and S bands and hasn't ea-

sily penetrated into the civilian sector," he said. "Currently (NavIC) only provides short code. This has to become Long Code for the use of the strategic sector. This prevents the signal from being breached. This had been part of the original scheme for NavIC, but less work has gone into it," he added.

There are five more satellites in the offing to replace defunct NavIC satellites that would be launched in the coming months. However, to make NavIC truly "global", more satellites would need to be placed in an orbit closer to earth than the current constellation, said Somanath.

‘Quicken 5G tower roll-out by fourfold’

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday gave the industry a target to make 10,000 towers 5G-capable every week as opposed to the current rate of 2,500 towers a week, with an eye on expediting the roll-out of 5G services.

“The government is doing everything that needs to be done... Industry also needs to move forward. In a week, at least 10,000 BTS’s should be enabled for 5G... From the current 2,500 BTS’s per week,” the

Minister unveiled sat-com service reforms, with an eye on services reaching remote areas

Minister said.

Mr. Vaishnaw on Wednesday also announced a slew of policy reforms for satellite communications services, that will help ease procedures and streamline clearances, with an aim to quicken the roll-out of these services across the country, especially in remote areas.

‘Science must become the priority of space missions, we need more money for it’

ISRO chief says the agency's role is to mentor and develop the industry ecosystem in India, and the new space policy will aid private companies

INTERVIEW

S. Somanath

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), told *The Hindu* that scientific missions ought to be more important in the future. Excerpts:

The LVM3 launch

vehicle successfully placed 36 satellites of the privately owned OneWeb consortium. However, you have recently indicated that the Chandrayaan-3 mission will now likely only be in June 2023. Are commercial launches more important to ISRO than scientific missions?

The entire space sector is based on demand. When there is demand, I have to fulfil it. We have had only four science missions but have 53 satellites in orbit.



The science component has always been very, very small. Science was never a priority but it must become the priority in the future. We've always had a very limited budget for science but we need more money so that we can do

science missions. We are not doing enough in science but if we prioritise science, we will not get money.

The space policy, which will define the future of commercial space applications in India, has been on the anvil for a while. Is it expected soon and will it spell out the functions of New Space India Ltd. (NSIL). (NSIL is a public sector company and the commercial arm of the ISRO).

The policy doesn't talk about the structure of the organisation. Policy only spells out the intent and that is to have more non-governmental entities enter the space sector. The elements of this and how we can achieve this 'intent' is what the policy will spell out.

In the future, does ISRO aspire to be NASA, in the sense more focused on ambitious science missions?

NASA is the national space agency of the United States

and decides that country's space activities. ISRO is the national space agency of India but the way both operate could be different because the U.S. ecosystem already has a developed industry.

In India, there is no industry capable of doing anything (space launches, satellite manufacturing) independently. Thus, ISRO's role is to mentor and develop the industry ecosystem here. Once we get to that point, we could discuss the role of ISRO. We have our own model.

Despite crackdown, pollution spikes sharply in south and west

Along with PM2.5 pollution, there were increases in CO, NH3, NO, NO2 and SO2 levels

DATA POINT

**Rebecca Rose Varghese,
Sonikka Loganathan
& Vignesh Radhakrishnan**

State governments across India announced various degrees of restrictions on bursting crackers this Deepavali. While the measures seem to have worked to an extent in eastern India and parts of the north, cities in the south and west reported record pollution levels on Deepavali. Pollution during Deepavali spikes due to firecrackers. In 2016, the Chest Research Foundation of India, Pune, conducted a series of experiments on firecrackers to determine the quantum of PM 2.5 particles emitted. For instance, the snake tablet produced a peak PM 2.5 level of 64,500 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre). PM 2.5 is particulate matter that has a diameter equal to or less than 2.5 microns. **Graph 1** depicts the peak levels of other types.

The Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Karnataka governments announced a two-hour window to burst crackers. In West Bengal and Haryana, only green crackers could be sold. In Delhi, there was a complete ban on crackers. There were similar measures in other States. **Graph 2** shows the PM 2.5 levels in µg/m³ recorded every hour between January 1, 2018 and October 25, 2022, in a measuring station across select cities. Each dot corresponds to the average PM 2.5 level in an hour. The higher the dot, the more the pollution. ● corresponds to Deepavali days in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, ● points to Deepavali days in 2022

The restrictions in place combined with the effects of Cyclone Sitrang ensured that the PM 2.5 levels did not cross 50 µg/m³ in any of the measuring stations in Kolkata. It stayed below India's 24-hour PM 2.5 limit of 60 µg/m³ during Deepavali hours. While no other State recorded such a drastic drop in pollution

this Deepavali, there was a general decline in the eastern and northern parts. Lucknow and Noida recorded the smallest Deepavali-day pollution spike in the last five years. Anand Vihar in Delhi saw a significant spike, but the level of pollution stayed below the levels seen in the last four years during Deepavali. In Amritsar and Gurugram, alarming levels of PM 2.5 pollution levels were recorded, but they did not reach the peak recorded in previous years.

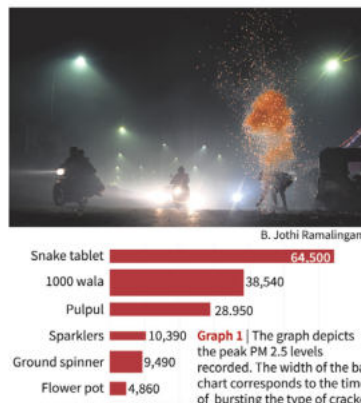
On the other hand, in Andhra Pradesh's capital Amaravati, at 10 p.m. on October 24, the PM 2.5 level peaked at 793 µg/m³ – the highest for any hour since the 2018 Deepavali spike. Bengaluru's Silk Board station peaked at 633 µg/m³ – the highest in the last five years. Sanathnagar station in Hyderabad peaked at 731 µg/m³ – the highest since 2019. Chennai's Velachery station peaked at 694 µg/m³ – the highest for any Deepavali day since 2018. Mumbai too recorded a spike during Deepavali though the levels paled in comparison to other cities. In Ahmedabad and Jaipur, the PM 2.5 levels reached nearly 999 µg/m³ on many Deepavali hours – the limit up to which the devices can record the pollution level.

Peaks in other types of air pollution can also be seen on Deepavali days. **Graph 3** shows hourly levels of carbon monoxide (CO), atmospheric ammonia (NH3), nitrous oxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), PM10 (particulate matter equal to or less than 10 microns) and sulphur dioxide (SO2) measured in the Velachery station in Chennai. There was a sharp spike in all these air pollutants during Deepavali hours. NO2 and SO2 levels peaked this year during Deepavali. NO and CO were close to the peak levels recorded earlier this year.

NO2 exposure affects lung function. According to the WHO, hospital admissions for cardiac disease and mortality increase on days with higher SO2 levels. Increase in CO levels is linked to congestive heart failures in the U.S.

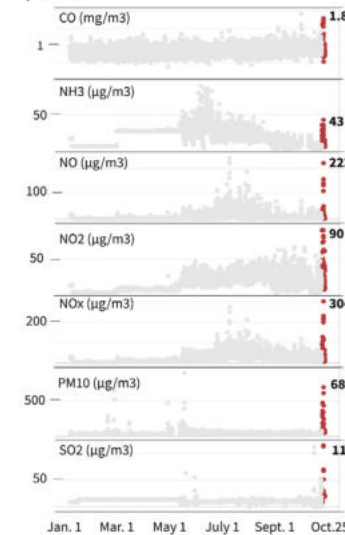
Deepavali day pollution

The charts depict the peak levels of PM 2.5 emitted from crackers, the hourly levels of PM 2.5 in various cities since 2018 and the hourly levels of other air pollutants in Chennai. The data were sourced from the Central Pollution Control Board

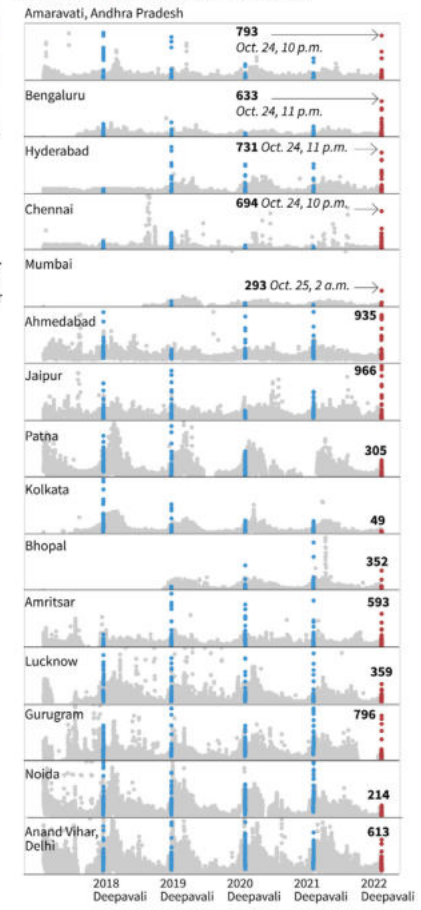


Graph 1 | The graph depicts the peak PM 2.5 levels recorded. The width of the bar chart corresponds to the time of bursting the type of cracker

Graph 3 | The chart shows hourly levels of air pollutants in the Velachery station in Chennai. ● points to Deepavali days in 2022



Graph 2 | The graph shows the PM 2.5 levels in µg/m³ recorded every hour between January 1, 2018 and October 25, 2022, in a measuring station across select cities. Each dot corresponds to the average PM 2.5 level in an hour. The higher the dot, the more the pollution. ● corresponds to Deepavali days in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, ● points to Deepavali days in 2022



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Amit Shah to brainstorm on internal security issues with State Home Ministers

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will hold a brainstorming session with the Home Ministers of all States on several internal security issues on October 27 and 28, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the delegates on the second day.

In most States, the Home portfolio is handled by the Chief Ministers and it is to be seen if the Chief Ministers of non-BJP-ruled States – Jharkhand, West Bengal, Rajasthan or Chhattisgarh – will attend the *Chintan Shivir* at Faridabad in Haryana.

A statement by the Union Home Ministry said the conference was an endeavour to provide a national perspective to policy formulation on internal security related matters, in accordance with the *Panch Pran* announced by the Prime Minister in his Inde-

pendence Day speech. Home Secretaries and Directors-General of Police (DGPs) of the States and Directors-General of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will also attend.

“The *Shivir* will bring more synergy in planning and coordination between various stakeholders at Centre and State levels,” the Ministry said.

The conference will have six sessions. On the first day, many issues such

as Home Guards, Civil Defence, Fire Protection and Enemy Property will be discussed.

On the second day, other issues such as cybersecurity, drug trafficking, women’s safety and border management will be discussed.

“The purpose of the sessions on various subjects is to encourage and ensure the participation of State governments,” the Ministry said.

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 provision 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 & privilege and issues arising out of these;

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.