

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

THE SHAPE OF CLIMATE JUSTICE IN A WARMING INDIA

CONTEXT: G-20 summit in Delhi agrees on renewable energy goals but lacks consensus on phasing out fossil fuels.

BACKGROUND: Effective energy transition must internalize emission costs and compensate those harmed, addressing climate injustice. While international principles are acknowledged, domestic policies in countries like India are shaped by economic priorities, leading to inequality concerns. India's focus on growth over climate justice within its borders evades addressing issues of inequality based on class, caste, and region.



News Highlights

- Inequality and Climate Change: Climate change disproportionately affects the poor, intensifying agrarian crises and income loss.
- Impact on Agriculture: Variations in climate elements directly impact farming, compounding farmers' income loss.
- Socio-environmental Equity: Addressing both environmental and socio-economic inequalities is vital for equitable and sustainable development.

- Emission Inequality: Less equitable societies tend to have higher carbon emissions per economic unit, posing challenges for India.
- Barriers to Climate Action: Inequality hampers societal responses to climate change, increasing the societal impact of carbon emissions.
- Greening Development: India's energy transition policies must consider existing inequalities and avoid worsening class, caste, and regional disparities.
- Emission Sources: Coal and crude oil are major contributors to India's energy supply, necessitating careful transition planning.
- Just Transition: Transitioning to renewables should protect livelihoods, offer alternative job opportunities, and reduce inequality for a sustainable future.

Greening Federalism

- Regional Impact: Coal-dependent regions face potential revenue and livelihood losses, while renewable energy is concentrated in wealthier areas.
- Economic Divide: Coal, cheap but polluting, provides significant revenue and employment, primarily in eastern and central India.
- Regional Inequality Mitigation: India's energy transition strategy should address these disparities, providing funds, reskilling, and local support.
- Federal Governance: India's federal structure requires cooperation between Union and State governments to tackle climate inequality effectively.
- Inter-Governmental Cooperation: Aligning policies and cooperation between different government levels is essential to address climate issues equitably.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS' LIST EXPANSION TO BE QUICKER IN FUTURE: FM

CONTEXT: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that expansion of the country's harmonised master list of infrastructure sectors may become quicker going forward, and promised to work with banks to meet the shipping sector's credit needs.

In the Union Budget, the Minister had announced an expert committee to review the list of sectors granted the infrastructure tag with a view to suggesting a classification and

financing framework. The Finance Minister said the expert committee constituted to review the harmonised master list (HML) would streamline the understanding of infrastructure. The framework being developed by this committee would be instrumental in updating the HML from time to time and not wait for another committee.

INTERNAL SECURITY

CBI CRACKS DOWN ON CYBER-ENABLED CRIME SYNDICATES IN 11 STATES

CONTEXT: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has searched 76 locations across 11 States including Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Bihar, Delhi, West Bengal, and Himachal Pradesh pertained to five cases as part of Operation “Chakra-II” against organised cyber-enabled financial crimes. The action has been taken in collaboration with national and international agencies, apart from private sector giants.

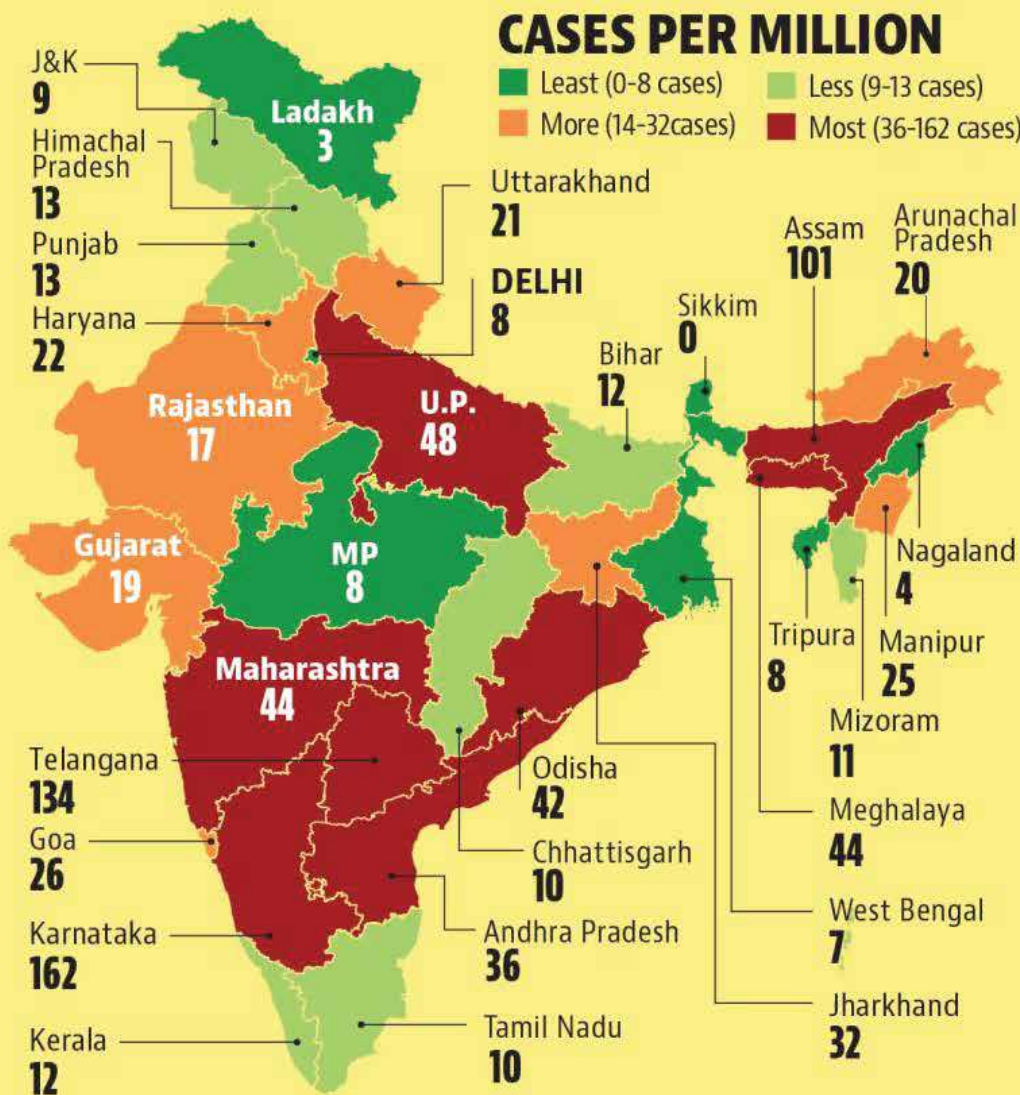
During the operation, the CBI seized 32 mobile phones, 48 laptops / hard disks, images of two servers, 33 SIM cards, and pen drives. A large number of bank accounts have been frozen. The CBI has also seized a dump of 15 email accounts, which contain exhaustive details of the “intricate web of deceit” spun by

the accused persons.

In these cases, the accused impersonated a global IT major and a multinational corporation with an online technology-driven trading platform. The accused, operating nine call centres across five States / Union Territory, systematically preyed on foreign nationals, masquerading as technical support representatives. Several groups were running these call centres in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi. Their victims were mainly from the U.S., the U.K. and Germany. The accused, who had been active over the past five years, used international payment gateways and channels to route the illegally acquired funds.

Vulnerable digital space

Number of cases filed last year under sections dealing with cyber crime rose to 50,035 from 44,735 a year before as more people moved to working from home, spending more time with digital tools



State	Cases filled in 2020	Change from 2019
Uttar Pradesh	11,097	-2.8%
Karnataka	10,741	-10.6
Maharashtra	5,496	10.7
Telangana	5,024	86.7
Assam	3,530	58.2
Odisha	1,931	30.0
Andhra Pradesh	1,899	0.7
Bihar	1,512	44.0
Rajasthan	1,354	-23.2
Gujarat	1,283	63.6
Jharkhand	1,204	10.0
Tamil Nadu	782	103.1
West Bengal	712	35.9
Madhya Pradesh	699	16.1
Haryana	656	16.3
Kerala	426	38.8
Punjab	378	55.6
Chhattisgarh	297	69.7
Uttarakhand	243	143.0
Delhi	168	46.1

FIGURE : Schematic map representation of the cyber cases per million in 2023.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

WHY SLLS ALSO NEED TO BE REFORMED

CONTEXT: The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2023 amend the substantive criminal law as codified in the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Indian Evidence Act (IEA).

The offences and procedures outlined in the IPC or CrPC represent just one facet of a general criminal law and its vital to recognise that the most critical offences and procedures are encompassed within the Special and Local Laws (SLLs). Nearly 39.9 % of all cognisable offences registered in 2021 were under Special and Local Laws (SLLs). As per the Crime in India Statistics of 2021, of the total of nearly 61 lakh cognisable offences registered, 24.3 lakh offences were registered under SLLs alone.

Need for reform in SLLs

On the one hand, SLLs such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) and the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999 (MCOCA) suffer from glaringly deficient, ambiguous and vague definitions of offences and terms such as 'terrorist act', 'unlawful activity', 'organised crime', 'organised crime syndicate' etc. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 is increasingly being criticised for its applicability to consensual sexual activities between minors. Concerns have also been raised regarding criminalisation of such conduct through SLLs which would otherwise fall squarely within the domain of civil wrongs or at best, regulatory wrongs. The Supreme Court in the case of P. Mohanraj versus M/s Shah Brothers Ispat Ltd. (2021) referred to Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 as a 'civil sheep' in a 'criminal wolf's' clothing.

SLLs serve as tools to dilute universally accepted values via due process. Increased powers of search and seizure under Section 43A of the UAPA and the admissibility of confessions

recorded by police officers under Section 18 of the MCOCA are prime examples. The stringent provisions provided for under Section 43(D)(5) of the UAPA, Section 37 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002 make the grant of bail a near impossibility.

An all-encompassing legal code

At the time of its drafting, it was expected that the IPC would be suitably amended in situations requiring the creation of new offences, clarification of existing offences, and removal of inconsistencies. It is true that the IPC today is criticised for the retention of an archaic morality as well as the colonial roots which underpins many of its offences. The challenges to homosexuality under Section 377 in Navtej Johar versus Union of India (2018) and sedition under Section 124A in S.G. Vombatkere versus Union of India (2022) are all symbolic of the need to reform several aspects of our criminal laws. Nonetheless, it is hard to argue that as far as the idea of codification is concerned, the penal experiment in the form of IPC and CrPC has been unsuccessful.

All SLLs which criminalise/seek to criminalise a conduct should find a place as separate chapters within the larger structure of the penal code. All SLLs which create a separate procedure for reporting of offences, arrest, investigation, prosecution, trial, evidence and bail must be included either as separate procedures within the CrPC or as exceptions to the general provisions provided therein.

Non-inclusion of the substantive and procedural aspects of the SLLs in the ongoing reform project is a serious limitation. It is imperative therefore that a second generation of reforms be brought in, in order to address the lacunae.



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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

CENTRE SAYS MEASURES IN PLACE TO CHECK PRICE RISE

CONTEXT: The Centre had taken adequate measures, including extension of restrictions on exports of sugar, wheat, and rice, to ensure that the prices of these essential items did not increase further and remained stable during the festival season.

The export duty of 20 % levied on parboiled rice would remain till March 31, 2024, to maintain adequate availability in the domestic market. The measure had led to a decline in export of parboiled rice by 65 % in quantity terms and 56 % in value terms. The export of broken rice was prohibited and an export duty of 20% was imposed on non-basmati white rice in September last year. The export of non-basmati white rice was prohibited in July this year. The purpose of extending the duty regime on parboiled rice is to keep a check on price rise of this crucial staple and maintain adequate availability in the domestic

market.

The Centre had decided to offload 50 lakh tonnes of wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme (domestic) through e-auction. The Food Corporation of India sells two lakh tonnes of wheat every week and so far 25.6 lakh tonne has been offloaded. Cooperative agencies NAFED and NCCF as well as Kendriya Bhandar is selling atta in the open market at ₹ 27.50 a kg. These measures have led to increased availability of wheat in the domestic market and moderated retail and wholesale prices in wheat in the country. The retail inflation in wheat is about 3.6% in one year. The government had also decided to extend the restriction on export of raw, white, refined and organic sugar indefinitely.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

INDIA'S SHARE OF GROWTH TO RISE TO 18 %

CONTEXT: India's contribution to global economic growth will rise by 2 percentage points in 5 years as the Indian economy is projected to grow faster in the coming years.

Currently China and India's contribution to global growth is 50%. Out of India contributes approximately 16%, while China contributes 34 % to the global growth. India's contribution is likely to grow from 16% to 18% in the next five years as India is growing faster.

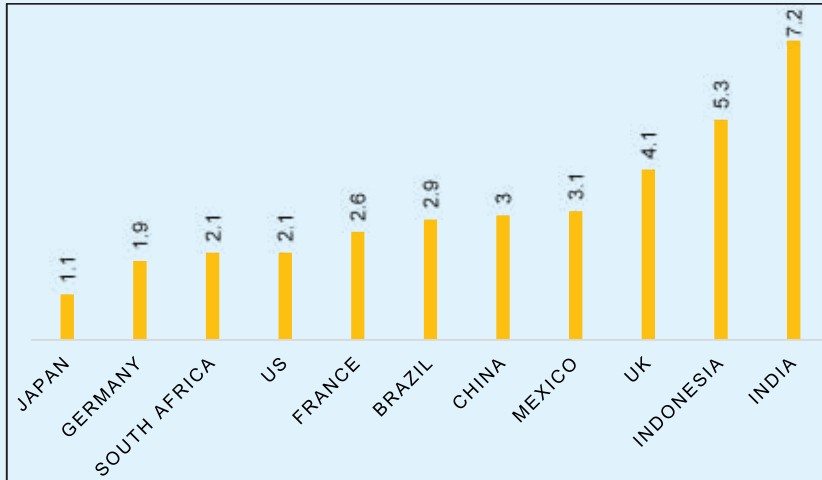
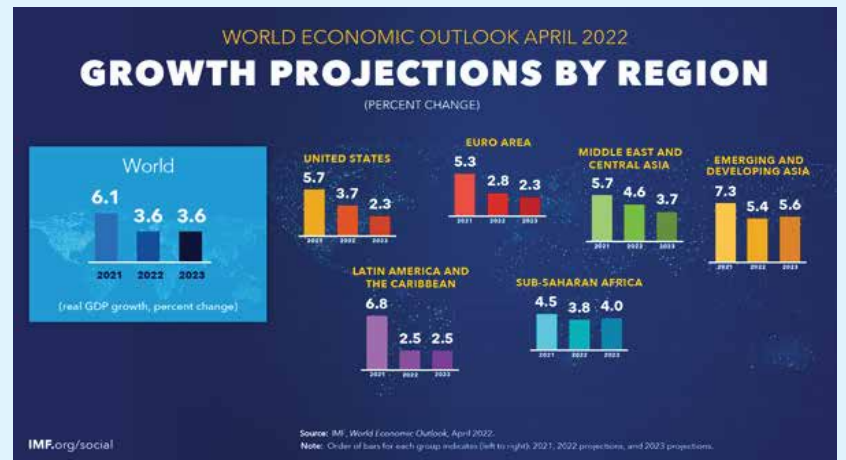


FIGURE: Column chart representation of the Real GDP growth rates of major economies in 2023-24.

The Asia Pacific region grow by 4.6 % in 2023 and by 4.2 % in 2024 contributing about two-thirds to global growth and remain a relatively bright spot despite a challenging global environment. India is projected to growth for FY2023/24 at 6.3% supported by strong government capital expenditure with some crowding in for

private sector investment, along with continued consumption growth and despite weakening external demand.



Headline inflation has resumed its downward trend and has returned within the RBI's tolerance band after prices start moderating after sharp increase in price in tomatoes and other vegetables in the summer. India's government was likely to meet its 5.9% fiscal deficit target in FY24. Revenue is expected to reach budgeted levels. Increased expenditures over subsidies, with higher-than-budgeted expenditure expected in some areas (such as additional LPG subsidy for the poor, higher MNREGA expenses) is expected. State governments' deficit is expected to be 2.8% of GSDP, below the deficit target of 3%, in line with past budget execution. The IMF has asked countries to retain a sufficiently restrictive monetary stance until inflation is firmly on track.



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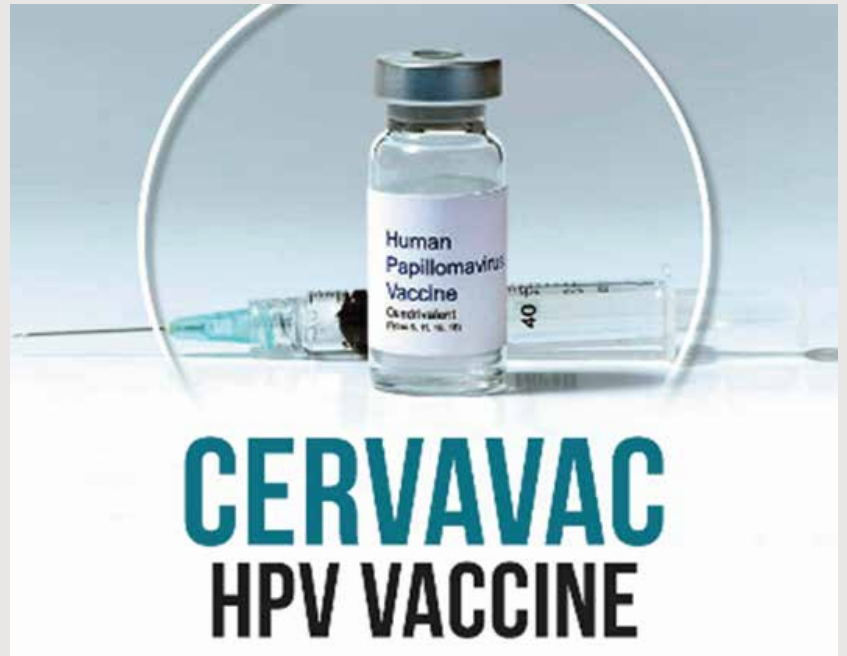


SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MAJOR REGIONAL DISPARITY IN OVERCOMING CANCER THOUGH SURVIVAL RATES ARE UP: STUDY

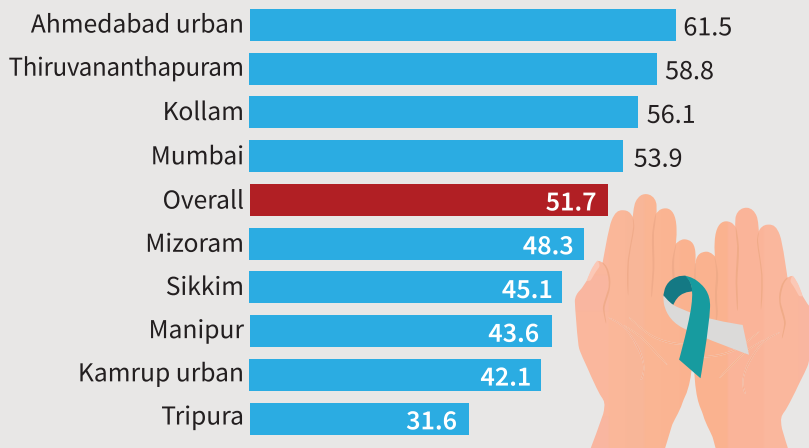
CONTEXT: A study reveals 52% survival rate for cervical cancer patients diagnosed in India from 2012-2015.

BACKGROUND: A report in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia, based on data from India's Population-Based Cancer Registries, highlighted significant regional variations in cervical cancer patient survival rates. The study assessed urban PBCRs across India to identify disparities in outcomes for cervical cancer patients.



Survival rates

The chart shows the survival rate (%) for cervical cancer across the 11 Population-Based Cancer Registries (PBCRs)



News Highlights

- Urban Registry Survival Rates: Ahmedabad demonstrated the highest cervical cancer survival rate at 61.5%, followed by Thiruvananthapuram (58.8%) and Kollam (56.1%).
- Lowest Survival Rate: Tripura reported the lowest survival rate at 31.6%.
- Study on Cervical Cancer: The study covered 5,591 cervical cancer cases between 2012 and 2015 in 11 Population-Based Cancer Registries (PBCRs).
- Improved Survival Rate: The overall survival rate was 52%, marking a 6% increase from the previous survey.
- Regional Disparities: Survival rates were lower in India's northeastern region due to factors like access to healthcare, travel costs, and poverty.

Cervavac, India's own HPV Vaccine for Cervical Cancer

- Cervavac Introduction:** Cervavac is India's first quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (qHPV) developed by Serum Institute of India.
- Target: Cervical Cancer:** The vaccine is designed to combat cervical cancer, which is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).
- Prevalence of HPV:** HPV is the most common viral infection in the reproductive tract, affecting most sexually active individuals.
- Cancer Development:** Cervical cancer typically takes 15-20 years to develop in those with regular immune systems, shorter in individuals with weakened immune systems.
- WHO's Involvement:** The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the importance of HPV vaccination for cancer prevention.

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Head Office:
Vedhik IAS Academy
Mercy Estate,
MG Road, Ravipuram,
Ernakulam-682 015,

Corporate office:
Vedhik IAS Academy
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

Regional office
Vedhik IAS Academy
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,
Museum Road. Bangalore -
560001. Karnataka, India.

GCC Office:
Bobscoedu,
Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain
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