

VEDHIK
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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_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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'India-China ties seeing a rough patch'

Jaishankar says disengagement is key to peace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SINGAPORE

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Friday that India and China were going through a "particularly bad patch" in their ties because Beijing had taken a set of actions in violation of agreements for which it still did not have a "credible explanation".

"I don't think the Chinese have any doubt on where we stand on our relationship and what's not gone right with it. I've been meeting my counterpart Wang Yi a number of times. As you would've experienced, I speak fairly clear, reasonably understandably [and] there is no lack of clarity so if they want to hear it, I am sure they would have heard it," Mr. Jaishankar said in



Bilateral talks: S. Jaishankar, left, with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Friday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

response to a question at a panel discussion on "Greater Power Competition: The Emerging World Order" at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum in Singapore.

India had told China that progress in the disengagement process in eastern Ladakh was essential for the restoration of peace and tranquillity, he said, stressing that it was the basis for the development of overall bilateral ties.

"We are going through a particularly bad patch in our relationship because they have taken a set of actions in violation of agreements for which they still don't have a credible explanation and that indicates some rethink about where they want to take our relationship, but that's for them to answer," he further said, in an apparent reference to the clashes in eastern Ladakh.

Higher GST rates disappoint textiles, clothing industry

‘Move will lead to higher prices for common man, inflation’

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA
COIMBATORE

The Centre’s notification on higher GST rates for several textile and apparel items from January next has come as a blow to micro, small and medium-scale textile and clothing units with industry groups asserting the move will push up prices for consumers and spur inflation.

In an industry where almost 80% of the units are in the MSME segment, fixing 12% for fabrics and garments will only lead to higher prices for the common man, said Sanjay K. Jain, chairman of the Committee on Textiles, Indian Chamber of Commerce.

“The industry and the



market can absorb 3% to 4% hike,” he remarked. “But 7% is too steep and sudden. It is the MSME units that make the low-cost garments mostly and these units may suffer from drop in demand.”

Industry groups were disappointed that their representations to the government to maintain status quo or bring the entire textile

supply chain under 5% rate had not been heeded, Mr. Jain added.

Clothing Manufacturers Association of India Chief Mentor Rahul Mehta said the notification was both ‘disappointing and distressing.’ The move would lead to higher prices for the end consumer at a time when high raw material costs had already impacted prices.

Industry sources observed that almost 90% of fabric production in the country was in the unorganised sector. Increasing the rate to 12% for fabrics would hit the power loom and handloom weavers. The textile sector was certain to require additional working capital now.

Error corrected

Laws should not be interpreted in a way that destroys the intent behind them

The Supreme Court has done well to correct an egregious error of interpretation committed by a judge in the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court in holding that sexual assault on a child victim would require “skin-to-skin” contact. It has set aside two judgments that acquitted two offenders against children from the graver charge of sexual assault, even while sentencing them to short prison terms for lesser offences. The High Court had construed Section 7 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, pertaining to sexual assault on children, in such a way that it concluded that the acts for which the accused were charged did not amount to sexual assault. The Attorney General of India took the initiative to challenge these two verdicts. The NCW also questioned the Court’s understanding of a POCSO provision, arguing that the law does not brook the sort of dilution that led to the Court ignoring the basic fact that the entire Act is aimed at penalising actions rooted in sexual intent. The Supreme Court showed alacrity and sensitivity in staying the portions of the judgment related to the diluted interpretation earlier this year. In one case, the act of groping a 12-year-old girl’s breast over her dress and, in another, the acts preparatory to an assault on a five-year-old were proved in the trial. Even after accepting these facts, the absence of physical contact with the girl’s body part was used to absolve the accused of the charge of sexual assault. In the second case, the Court took a lenient view that the act of “holding the hands of the prosecutrix” and “opening the zip of the pant” did not fit into the definition of sexual assault.

It was quite apparent that the High Court’s understanding was flawed and out of sync with the legislative intent behind the enactment of a stringent law to protect children based on principles found in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Writing for the Bench, Justice Bela M. Trivedi has said that restricting the interpretation of the words ‘touch’ or ‘physical contact’ to ‘skin to skin contact’ would be a narrow and pedantic interpretation of Section 7, and if such a narrow interpretation is accepted it would frustrate the very object of the Act. The judgment sets right not only a misinterpretation of the statute but also underscores that the core ingredient of a sexual offence is the “sexual intent” behind it. While restoring the trial court’s conviction for ‘sexual assault’ in one case, and ‘aggravated sexual assault’ in the other, the apex court has rejected attempts to interpret a law in favour of the accused when there was no real ambiguity in it. And in any case, as Justice S. Ravindra Bhat has pointed out in his concurring opinion, an interpretation should not be destructive of the law’s intention.

Govt. relents, decides to spike farm laws

- PM announces the repeal of the three Acts in address to the nation
- He says process will be completed in the winter session of Parliament
- Modi apologises to nation for not being able to convince farmers

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced the repeal of the three contentious farm laws, assuring farmer groups protesting against them for the past year that the legislative process for the withdrawal would be completed in the winter session of Parliament.

In a television broadcast to the nation, Mr. Modi also announced the formation of a committee with representatives from the Central and State Governments to look into issues related to agriculture, such as zero-budget farming, fertilizers, change in crop patterns, transparency in establishing minimum support prices and so on.

The Government's intentions in bringing in these laws was to provide alternatives to small farmers, who constituted 80% of farmers in the country, for access to markets and good prices for their crops, he stated.

"I apologise to you, my countrymen, that despite my Government's good intentions, there may have been something lacking in our *tapasya* [penance] that we could not convince some of our farmer brothers of the intentions of these laws which were as pure as the light from a lamp," he said.

'Organised dialogue'

"Earlier Governments too considered such measures and we consulted a range of stakeholders and experts before bringing in these laws. Many farmers were happy with the reforms and we are grateful to them. We couldn't explain to some farmers despite our efforts," he said.

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LONG BATTLE Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on the repeal of the three contentious farm laws came after nearly a year of relentless protest by farmers. A brief timeline of the struggle:



Moment of relief: Farmers celebrating the announcement on the repeal of the farm laws, at Singhu border in Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Sept. 15 - 22, 2020: The three farm Bills are passed in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha by voice vote

Sept. 25, 2020: Farmers across India come out in protest in response to a call by the AIKSCC, an umbrella body of farmers

Sept. 26, 2020: The Shiromani Akali Dal quits the BJP-led NDA over the farm laws

Dec. 3, 2020: Government holds the first round of

talks with farmers but the meeting remains inconclusive

Dec. 9, 2020: Farmer leaders reject the Union Government's proposal to amend the three laws



Dec. 11, 2020: Bharatiya Kisan Union moves the Supreme Court against the three agricultural laws

Jan. 12, 2021: The SC stays implementation of the laws; sets up a four-member committee

Jan. 26, 2021: Protesters clash with the police during a tractor parade called by farmer unions

Jan. 29, 2021: Government proposes to suspend the laws for a year

and a half and sets up a joint committee, but farmers reject the proposal

July 22, 2021: Nearly 200 protesting farmers start a parallel "Monsoon Session", Kisan Sansad, near the Parliament House

Oct. 22, 2021: The SC observes that it was not against people's right to protest even on matters that are sub-judice, but states that public roads cannot be blocked indefinitely

As the Prime Minister pointed out in his address, the Government of India will keep serving our farmers and always support them in their endeavours — AMIT SHAH, Union Home Minister

Country's *amnadatas* have made arrogance bow its head down through *satyagraha*. Congratulations on this victory against injustice! *Jai Hind. Jai Hind ka Kisan* — RAHUL GANDHI, Congress leader

The defeat of hubris, a confrontation on hold

Addition of local agrarian demands into the call for the repeal of the farm laws may have forced the Government's hand



R. RAMAKUMAR

The repeal of the three farm laws by the Union government, on Friday, marks a historic victory for the farmer's movement in India. For more than a year, thousands of farmers had barricaded Delhi, and their protests were gradually evolving into a pan-Indian movement of resistance. The belated, though wise, decision by the Government to repeal the laws brings down the curtains on the agitation in Delhi but is unlikely to douse the political fervour it has left behind.

The Union government's response to the protests were appalling and marked by hubris. Its focus was on controlling and positivising the narrative. Efforts were made to break, divide, buy out, demean, denigrate, demonise and shame the protesters, who were conveniently branded as terrorists and Khalistanis. Seditious cases were filed against the protesters. Teargas shells rained on the protest marches, and officials publicly asked the police to smash the heads of protesters. In Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, a vehicle was driven into a peaceful demonstration, killing several persons. That the protests endured and survived such brutal responses is indeed salutary.

The broader context

"Reforms" in agriculture, advocated by right-wing economists after 1991, were focused on dismantling the institutional support structures in Indian agriculture that were established after the 1960s. These support structures – in prices, subsidies, credit, marketing, research and extension – were instrumental in India's achievement of food self-sufficiency between

the 1960s and the 1980s.

In agricultural marketing, the focus of attack was the *mandis* governed by the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Acts passed by State Assemblies. It was argued that if India needs to diversify its cropping pattern into export-oriented and high-value crops, *mandis* need to give way to private markets, futures markets and contract farming. The APMC Acts discriminated against farmers by not allowing them to interact directly with the big corporate buyers and exporters. So, the APMC Acts must be amended so that any private market or rural collection centre can freely emerge anywhere without approval of the local *mandi* or the payment of a *mandi* tax, and so that contract farming can be popularised. Similarly, the advocacy for the amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 rested on the view that private corporate investment can be incentivised into storage and warehousing if stock limits are relaxed for traders.

It was a long-held constitutional consensus in India that agricultural marketing was the legislative arena of State governments. Thus, in 2003, the Union government prepared a Model Act on agricultural marketing and sent it to States for passage in State Assemblies. This was followed by the preparation and circulation of two other Model Acts, in 2017 and 2018. Reception to these Model Acts was neither dismissive nor welcoming. Many States selected a few clauses, which they found attractive and suitable to their contexts, and accordingly amended their APMC Acts between 2003 and 2020. Only one State – Bihar – used the occasion to completely annul its APMC Act in 2006.

Laws were unconstitutional

The consensus was broken in 2020, when the Union government took up on itself the task of legislating on agricultural marketing and passed the farm laws. Fed-



eral principles were violated as the Union government invoked Entry 33 of the Concurrent List to intervene into matters in Entry 14, Entry 26 and Entry 27 of the State List. The farm laws even interfered with Entry 28 of the State List, which were not subject to Entry 33 of the Concurrent List. Thus, to begin with, the farm laws were reasonably and justifiably argued to be unconstitutional.

However, the Supreme Court of India refused to act swiftly on petitions filed before it. Instead, without consulting the protesting farmer's organisations, it appointed, in January 2021, a committee of four persons, all of whom had publicly declared their support for the farm laws. Farmer's organisations, on their part, distanced themselves from the committee and continued with their agitation.

Apart from constitutionality, the contents of farm laws were also widely criticised. Bihar's example showed that private investment was unlikely to flow into agricultural markets even if APMC Acts were annulled. In fact, the exploitation of farmers by unscrupulous traders intensified in Bihar after 2006. Kerala never had an APMC Act.

Yet, there was little presence of private investment in its agricultural markets. Maharashtra delisted fruits and vegetables from the ambit of APMCs in 2016. Still, the inflow of private investment into agricultural markets was only marginal. Thus, what was likely was that a formal and regulated market might fragment itself into an informal and unregulated market if the

APMC Acts were weakened. Furthermore, two other problems were highlighted. One, *mandi* taxes were used to invest in rural infrastructure in States such as Punjab. If *mandis* are weakened, what would substitute for such investments? Two, even if private markets emerged, how would they address the structural problem of poor farm-gate aggregation of the produce of small and marginal farmers? Would one middleman be simply substituted by another? Proponents of farm laws had no convincing answers.

The grievance redress mechanisms for contract farming also came up for criticism. The obliteration of the power of civil courts and their substitution with a weak mechanism led by the sub-divisional magistrate threatened to be a serious impediment to a just redress of complaints. It was feared that this may benefit corporate sponsors more than the contracting farmers.

It pointed towards corporates

Finally, the overall thrust of the farm laws appeared to encourage the participation of larger corporate players in agricultural markets rather than farmer-friendly organisations, such as cooperatives or Farmer Producer Companies (FPC). Especially in the case of the amendment of the Essential Commodities Act, there was reasonable suspicion that a handful of corporate players were to substantially benefit from investments in logistics, storage and warehousing.

The farmers' protests began from States such as Punjab and Haryana where the *mandis* were deeply rooted institutions in the local economy and society. However, as days passed, the agitation spread to western Uttar Pradesh and from there to many other States. In a few months, the agitation threatened to grow into a pan-Indian phenomenon with a constant addition of local agrarian demands into the larger demand

for the repeal of farm laws. Such local customisation of the agitation immensely helped in the cause of mobilisation. An unusually large number of women actively participated in the protests. In regions such as western U.P., the protests also threatened to bridge and repair the communal fault lines that were consciously cultivated after the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013. Numerous protesters perished on the protest grounds, but support for the protests grew not just domestically, but also globally.

A mindset of intolerance

It was not just hubris that marked the Government's response, but also infantilism. When pop star and celebrity Rihanna tweeted a rather innocent comment about the protests, the entire machinery of the ministry of external affairs was awoken for an extraordinarily disproportionate response. Indian embassies were asked to spread the word that she and other celebrities were propagandists who had irresponsibly ganged up to discredit progress in India. These responses showed nothing but a deeply disturbing official mindset of intolerance and insecurity.

The repeal of the farm laws has, at least temporarily, put an end to an ugly and eminently avoidable chapter of confrontation between the Union government and the farmers. However, the momentum that the agitation has left behind would surely linger on. The agitation has led to a positive politicisation of several agrarian demands, including the need for stable markets and remunerative prices. A confidence has grown that committed struggles matter and even aggressive governments can be made to kneel. New rural mobilisations around demands to address the larger and persistent agrarian crisis are likely to emerge and grow. We surely are in for interesting times.

R. Ramakumar is Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Indigenous chopper, drones handed over to armed forces

India working to make its forces self-reliant, says PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Admission of girls has started from this session in 33 Sainik schools, and Rani Laxmibai-like daughters will emerge to take responsibility of defence, security and development of the country on their shoulders, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday at the Rashtriya Raksha Samarpan Parv in Jhansi.

He handed over the indigenously-built Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) to the Air Force, two small drones built by Indian start-ups to the Army, and electronic warfare suites to the Navy.

Self-reliance

“For a long time, India has been counted among the largest arms importers in the world, but today the mantra of the country is Make in India, Make for the world. Today India is working to make its forces self-reliant,” Mr. Modi said.

“Today, here from Jhansi, a new chapter in India’s defence sector is being written. India’s borders will now be even more secure,” he said after laying the foundation stone for a ₹400 crore project by Bharat Dynamics Limited for the manufacture of propulsion systems of Anti-Tank Guided Missiles



In tribute: A stone signage on Rani Laxmibai unveiled in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday. ■PTI

(ATGM). The three-day Parv in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh is being organised as part of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahaotsav’ celebrations by the MoD, along with the Uttar Pradesh Government.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the three-day event on November 17.

Sculpture unveiled

Mr. Modi also formally launched several schemes of the Defence Ministry and unveiled a stone signage of Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi on her 193rd birth anniversary at the precincts of the Jhansi Fort.

The twin-engine LCH designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Li-

mitted (HAL) is a 5-8 tonne class combat helicopter. It is the only attack helicopter in the world that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 m (16,400 ft), with considerable weapons and fuel load, significantly augmenting the firepower of the IAF and Army in high altitude areas.

The LCH will eventually be deployed along the Line of Actual Control with China, in addition to the AH-64E Apache helicopters in service.

The Prime Minister also handed over DRDO-designed and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) manufactured advanced Electronic Warfare suites to the Navy.

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;
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.