

VEDHIK
DAJLY NEWS
ANALYSIS

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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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Hero stone unearthed in Villupuram district

Analysis indicates artefact is likely from the 4th to 5th Century CE: ASI archaeologist

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

A team from the Chennai Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has unearthed a hero stone, likely to be from the 4th to 5th Century CE, at V. Nerkunam village in Vikravandi taluk, Villupuram district.

Palaeographic analysis of the inscription on the stone indicated that it was from a period when the script was transitioning from Tamil Brahmi to Vatteluttu script, ASI officials said. “While some of the letters were in Tamil Brahmi, others were in Vatteluttu. It is based on this palaeographic analysis that we are dating the stone to be from the 4th to 5th Century CE,” said R. Ramesh, as-



Ancient memorial: The stone was installed in remembrance of a person who died in a battle at the village. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sistant archaeologist, Chennai Circle, ASI.

The team visited the village after being alerted by two residents – Chandramouleeswaran and Gnana-

valli. The stone was lying almost fully buried. On unearthing it, it was found to be partially broken with the first line of the inscription missing. According to Mr.

Ramesh, the remaining five lines available read that the hero stone was installed in memory of the youngest son of a person named Kizhan Maraiyaman from Nerkundram village, who died in a battle at the village.

“The inscription also indicates that the village has retained almost the same name throughout these centuries. It has just transformed from Nerkundram to Nerkunam now,” he said.

Apart from this, sculptures of Goddess Maheshwari and Lord Vinayaka from 10th century CE were also found in this village. The team from ASI included M. Prasanna, assistant archaeologist, and P.T. Nagarajan, assistant epigraphist.



In solidarity: Mechanised boat fishermen struck work, protesting against the Sri Lanka navy for drowning fisherman Rajkiran by ramming into the fishing boat on October 23, 2021 •BALACHANDAR L

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A festering crisis in the Palk Strait

A moratorium on bottom trawling and support to the fishermen is a good first step towards a solution

THE GIST

■ The constant cycle of arrests and deaths of the fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy show the unresolved fisheries conflict festering in the barely 30-mile-wide (at its narrowest point) Palk Strait.

■ In Tamil Nadu, daily wage fishermen work on mechanised fishing vessels used for 'bottom trawling'. The bottom trawling fishing method is where large fishing nets are dragged along the seabed, scooping out a huge quantity of prawns, small fishes and virtually everything else at one go. The practice although deemed destructive world over, has ensured sizeable profits for vessel owners and a small income for the fishermen taking the highest risk.

■ Sri Lanka's response to the problem has been largely a military and legal one, tasking its Navy with patrolling the seas and arresting "encroachers", banning trawling, and levying stiff fines on foreign vessels engaged in illegal fishing in its territorial waters.

MEERA SRINIVASAN

On December 19, the Sri Lankan Navy seized eight fishing vessels and arrested 55 fishermen on board on charges of poaching and 'illegal fishing'. In this piece dated October 26, 2021, Meera Srinivasan explains the decade long unresolved fishing conflict that has affected fishermen both in Tamil Nadu and northern Sri Lanka.

Rajkiran, 30, from Tamil Nadu's coastal Pudukkottai district, is the fifth Indian fisherman to lose his life in the Palk Strait this year, after Samson Darwin, A. Mesiya, V. Nagaraj and S. Senthil Kumar from Kamanathapuram, who died in January. The boat that Rajkiran was on, with two others, sank late on October 18 after reportedly colliding with a Sri Lankan Navy patrol vessel. The two other fishermen were remained in Sri Lanka until November 1, while Rajkiran was reported "missing", until his body was recovered by the Navy a few days after the incident. Tamil Nadu fishermen's associations have accused the Sri Lankan Navy of brutally attacking Rajkiran, while Sri Lanka has denied the allegations.

In both instances this year, what we know is that the fishermen died while trying to earn a living. In both cases, they reportedly crossed the International Maritime Boundary Line, an invisible demarcation between India and Sri Lanka. They were intercepted in Sri Lankan waters by the Sri Lankan Navy for "illegal fishing", following which some of them returned dead.

New Delhi conveyed a "strong protest" to Colombo after the death of the four fishermen in January, allegedly at the hands of the Sri Lankan Navy. But there is no sign of a full inquiry since, let alone a credible one. The distressing incidents are neither peculiar to this year, nor inevitable.

Unresolved conflict

The fishermen's deaths serve as a stark reminder of the unresolved fisheries conflict festering in the barely 30-mile-wide (at its narrowest point) Palk Strait. The problem has existed for more than a decade now, from the time Sri Lanka's 30 year-long civil war ended in 2009. That was when the island's northern Tamil fishermen, who were displaced and barred access to the sea, began returning to their old homes, with hopes of reviving their livelihoods and resurrecting their lives. Their return, however, marked the beginning of a new tension with Tamil fishermen on the other side of the sea. This has posed a serious threat to their livelihoods, fishing gear, and the marine resources they rely on.

In Tamil Nadu, daily wage fishermen are only too aware of the risks that come with working on

mechanised fishing vessels used for 'bottom trawling'. Their wage depends on the catch they bring back. Using the bottom trawling fishing method, they drag large fishing nets along the seabed, scooping out a huge quantity of prawns, small fishes and virtually everything else at one go. The practice, deemed destructive for the world over, has ensured sizeable profits for their employers – the vessel owners – and a small income for the fishermen taking the highest risk.

Incessant bottom trawling along the coast of Tamil Nadu over the years has meant that the fishermen are drawn to the relatively resource-rich Sri Lankan waters. This pushes them into a cycle of arrest, remand, release, or in some unfortunate cases, violence or death at sea.

The Sri Lankan state's response to the problem has been largely a military and legal one, tasking its Navy with patrolling the seas and arresting "encroachers", banning trawling, and levying stiff fines on foreign vessels engaged in illegal fishing in its territorial waters. Little support has been extended to war-affected, artisanal fishermen in the Northern Province by way of infrastructure or equipment. Despite accumulating big losses, the fishermen received no assistance even during pandemic-induced lockdown months.

The hefty penalty on foreign vessels proved a deterrent, at least temporarily. But over the last few months, northern fishermen have sighted Indian trawlers frequently, especially when the Sri Lankan Navy relaxed its patrol, fearing import of COVID-19 infections.

Urgent solution

India and Sri Lanka have held many rounds of bilateral talks in the last decade between government officials as well as fisher leaders. The outcomes have mostly ranged from deadlocks, with Tamil Nadu refusing to give up bottom trawling, to template responses from the governments, with India seeking a "humanitarian response" from Sri Lanka. The closest that the two countries came to reaching a solution was in November 2016, following a meeting in New Delhi led by the Foreign and Fisheries Ministers from both sides, with other key interlocutors. A Joint Working Group was constituted to first and foremost, expedite "the transition towards ending the practice of bottom trawling at the earliest".

The Indian government's attempt to divert fishermen to deep sea fishing has not taken off as was envisaged, even as profit-hungry boat owners in Tamil Nadu stubbornly defend their trawler trade. Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu fishermen continue to allege that the Sri Lankan Navy is unleashing violence on them; Sri Lanka denies this. Five

years since, we are at a rather low point in the fisheries conflict, with a rising human cost.

Meanwhile, this could be the biggest test yet to the solidarity that Tamil Nadu continues to express with Sri Lankan Tamils who bore the brunt of the civil war and still await justice and a political solution.

By now, it is evident that bottom trawling has maximised not only the profits made by vessel owners in Tamil Nadu, but also the risk faced by poor, daily wage fishermen employed from the coastal districts. The rich owners and those employed by them for a meagre wage ought not to be clumped together simply as "Tamil Nadu fishermen", without recognising that their interests and risks differ enormously.

It is equally well known that the relentless trawling by Indian vessels has caused huge losses to northern Sri Lankan fishermen. Their catch has fallen drastically and they count vanishing varieties of fish. They are dejected as their persisting calls to end bottom trawling have not been heeded by their counterparts in Tamil Nadu, or "brothers" as they repeatedly call them.

For politicians and activists in Tamil Nadu, the death of fishermen is understandably the most outrageous, emotive dimension of this complex problem – especially since no past case has been probed or perpetrator held accountable. All the same, seeing the conflict merely through the prism of Tamil Nadu fishermen and the Sri Lankan Navy may not yield a solution to the problem, although that might keep its most deplorable symptom in focus.

At the heart of the conflict is a tale of competing livelihoods in a narrow stretch of the sea, amid a looming environmental threat, and a glaring asymmetry of power – be it in numbers, equipment, or political backing – between two Tamil-speaking fishing communities. The growing trust deficit between them does not augur well for the prospect of a solution.

India and Sri Lanka must urgently refocus their energies to address this crisis. As the first step, Tamil Nadu must consider a moratorium on bottom trawling in the Palk Strait. Such a move must be accompanied by both New Delhi and Colombo substantially supporting their respective fishing communities to cope with the suspension of trawling on the Tamil Nadu side and the devastating impact of the pandemic on both sides. The time must be used for evolving a lasting solution. Strong bilateral ties are not only about shared religious or cultural heritage, but also about sharing resources responsibly, in ways that the lives and livelihoods of our peoples can be protected.

NATO seeks 'meaningful' talks with Russia early next year

Putin hints at 'military-technical measures' against actions

REUTERS
BRUSSELS

NATO will seek meaningful discussions with Moscow early next year to address tensions amid a Russian military build-up on Ukraine's border, alliance Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Tuesday.

"We remain ready for meaningful dialogue with Russia and I intend to call a new meeting of the NATO-Russia Council as soon as possible in the new year,"

Mr. Stoltenberg told a news conference in Brussels.

Mr. Stoltenberg, however, made it clear that it was solely up to NATO and Ukraine to decide about a future membership of Kyiv.

Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin warned on Tuesday that Russia was prepared to take "military-technical measures" in response to "unfriendly" Western actions over the Ukraine conflict.

Mr. Putin told defence mi-

nistry officials that if the West continued its "obviously aggressive stance", Russia would take "appropriate retaliatory military-technical measures".

"If this infrastructure moves further – if U.S. and NATO missile systems appear in Ukraine – then their approach time to Moscow will be reduced to seven or 10 minutes," he said. Despite hinting at conflict, Mr. Putin said that Russia wants to avoid "bloodshed".

China slaps sanctions on U.S. govt. officials over Xinjiang

In retaliatory action, Beijing bars four of them from visiting the country

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

China announced sanctions on Tuesday on four members of the U.S. government's Commission on International Religious Freedom in retaliation for penalties imposed on Chinese officials over complaints of abuses in the country's northwestern Xinjiang region.

The tit-for-tat sanctions add to spiralling tension over Xinjiang.

Tit for tat

Washington has banned imports from the region that might be made with forced labour, while activists are calling for a boycott of February's Winter Olympics in Beijing. China has denied accusations of abuses and earlier retaliated by publicising



Bone of contention: Uighurs praying at the Id Kah Mosque in Xinjiang region in China. ■ AP

calls for boycotts of foreign shoe and clothing brands.

The chairwoman and three members of the U.S. panel are barred from visiting mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, and any assets they have in the country will be frozen, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said.

Mr. Zhao identified those targeted as chairwoman Nadine Maenza, deputy chairman Nury Turkel and members Anurima Bhargava and James Carr. Mr. Zhao gave no indication whether they have assets in China.

China threatened to retaliate after the U.S. Treasury announced sanctions on De-

ember 10 on two officials accused of involvement in repression of Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. Beijing is accused of mass detentions, forced abortions and other abuses.

U.S. Treasury sanctions

Treasury targeted Shohrat Zakir, chairman of the region's government from 2018 until early this year, and Erken Tuniyaz, who holds the position now and previously was deputy chairman.

"The United States should withdraw the so-called sanctions and stop interfering in Xinjiang's affairs and China's internal affairs," Mr. Zhao said. "China will make further responses in accordance with the development of the situation."

'Anti-national' not defined in statutes, says Centre

It was first inserted in the Constitution in 1976 but removed in 1977, Union Minister tells Lok Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The word 'anti-national' has not been defined in statutes, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. It added that 'anti-national activity' was inserted in the Constitution during Emergency in 1976 but was removed later.

Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said this in response to a question by All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen member Asaduddin Owaisi on whether the government had defined the meaning of 'anti-national' under any legislation or 11

rules or any other legal enactment that is enforced in the country.

"The word 'anti-national' has not been defined in statutes. However, there are criminal legislation and various judicial pronouncements to sternly deal with unlawful and subversive activities which are detrimental to the unity and integrity of the country," Mr. Rai said in the written reply.

"In this regard, it is relevant to mention that the Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act, 1976 inserted in the Constitution Article 31D (during Emergency)



Nityanand Rai

which defined 'anti-national activity' and this Article 31D was, subsequently, omitted by the Constitution (Forty-third Amendment) Act, 1977," he added.

Mr. Owaisi also sought details of the Supreme Court guidelines to deal with crimes relating to 'anti-national' activity and the number of people arrested for indulging in such activities during the past three years.

In reply, the Minister said that 'Public Order' and 'Police' were State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution and the "data about number of people arrested for indulging in anti-national activities is not maintained centrally".

The responsibility of maintaining law and order, including investigation, re-

gistration and prosecution of crimes, protection of life and property, rested primarily with the respective State government, he pointed out.

NCRB data

In 2019, when the National Crime Records Bureau released the annual 'Crime in India' report for 2017, it included for the first time a new chapter on 'Crime Committed by Anti National Elements'. The chapter listed "North East insurgents, Left Wing Extremists and Terrorists (including Jihadi terrorists)" as the three anti-national elements.

House to review Bill on raising marriage age

"In the 19th century, the age of marriage of girls was 10. In 1940, this was raised from 12 to 14, and in 1978, it was 15. Today, for the first time both men and women on the basis of equality can take a decision to get married at the age of 21. From 2015 until 2020 we have stopped 20 lakh child marriages, according to research. The NFHS-5 data tell us that nearly 23% girls under 18 were married," the Minister said.

Several members of the Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and the Biju Janata Dal demanded greater scrutiny and urged that the Bill be sent to a standing committee.

IUML member E.T. Mohammed Bashir said the Bill be withdrawn as "it was unwanted, unconstitutional and in violation of Article 25 of the Constitution. This Bill will have far-reaching consequences in the country. It is an attack on personal laws and the fundamental rights in the country".

Asaduddin Owaisi of the AIMIM said the Bill was retrogressive and questioned why the age of marriage for girls was being raised to 21 when "18-year-olds can choose a PM, be in a live-in [relationship] and have a sexual relationship under POCSO".

He also sought to draw the attention of the House to the poor employment rates of women in the country and said that the female labour force participation (FLPR) rate in India was lower than that in Somalia.

Thinking before linking

Despite progressive aspects, linking electoral rolls with Aadhaar raises apprehensions

An unwillingness to allow meaningful debate and invite wider consultation can undo even the progressive aspects of problematic legislation. Ignoring protests, the Union government has managed to push through a Bill in Parliament to link electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem. On the face of it, the Bill's objective – to purify the rolls and weed out bogus voters – may appear laudable, and the seeding of Aadhaar data with voter identity particulars may seem to be a good way of achieving it. Indeed, this can also allow for remote voting, a measure that could help migrant voters. The four qualifying dates for revision of rolls will help in faster enrolment of those who turn 18. However, other aspects hold grave implications for electoral democracy. The Opposition underscored the possible disenfranchisement of legitimate voters unwilling or unable to submit Aadhaar details, the possible violation of privacy, and the possibility that demographic details may be misused for profiling of voters. Each is a valid concern that ought to be considered by a parliamentary committee. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju has said the proposal has been unanimously approved by the Parliamentary Committee on Law and Justice. But, it is not clear if the specifics of the Bill had been discussed widely and public opinion sought.

There are indeed complaints that some electors may be registered in more than one constituency and that non-citizens have been enrolled, but these can be addressed by other identification processes. In fact, the Aadhaar database may be irrelevant to verify voter identity because it is an identifier of residents and not citizens. And the complaints of wrongful enrolment have come up even against the unique identity number allotted to more than 90% of the population. Mr. Rijiju is confident that the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill satisfies the tests laid down by the Supreme Court – a permissible law, a legitimate state interest and proportionality. However, this has to be rigorously examined. Even though the Aadhaar requirement is said to be voluntary, in practice it can be made mandatory. The Bill says the election registration officer may require the submission of the Aadhaar number both for new enrolments and those already enrolled. The choice not to submit is linked to a “sufficient cause”, which will be separately prescribed. Whether the few permissible reasons not to intimate one's Aadhaar number include an objection on principle is unknown. If an individual's refusal to submit the detail is deemed unacceptable, it may result in loss of franchise. Therefore, the measure may fail the test of proportionality. If the Government really has no ulterior motive in the form of triggering mass deletions from the electoral rolls, it must invite public opinion and allow deeper parliamentary scrutiny before implementing the new provisions that now have the approval of both Houses of Parliament.

Govt. refuses poll Bill scrutiny

Opposition walks out, as plea for sending legislation to a House panel was denied

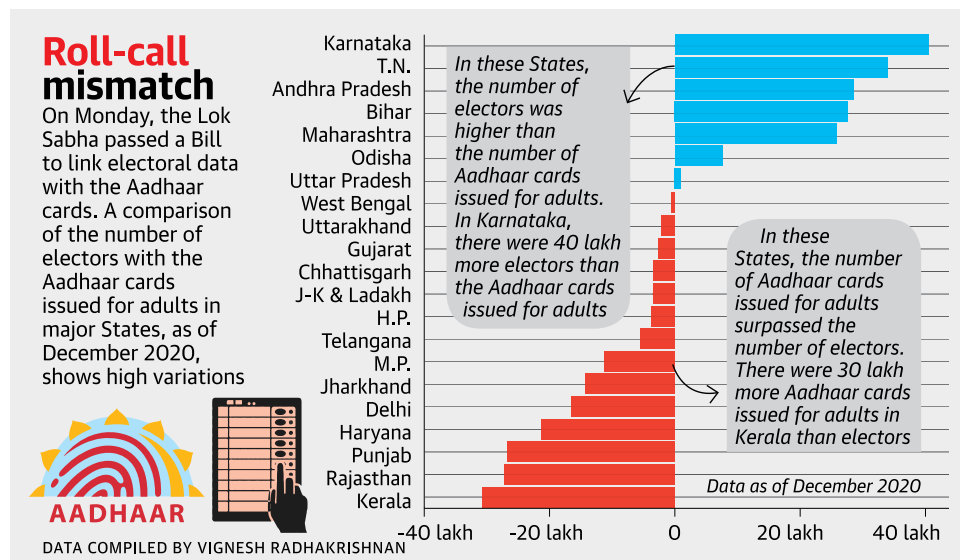
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, amid vociferous protests and a walkout by the Opposition.

CPI(M) member John Brittas and DMK member Tiruchi Siva moved a motion to send the legislation for further parliamentary scrutiny, but it was defeated by voice vote. Mr. Brittas pressed for a division, but Deputy Chairman Harivansh rejected the demand, saying the division cannot take place when the Opposition members were protesting in the Well of the House.

Ignoring the Opposition slogans, Mr. Harivansh went ahead with the procedure to pass the Bill. It was at this point, the Congress and the majority of the Opposition walked out.

However, the Trinamool Congress MPs stayed back. Trinamool floor leader Derek O'Brien, moving a point of order, said, "Please under-



stand we have all the regard for the Chair and the rules. But you are doing the same thing as you did with the three farm Bills." He flicked the rulebook towards the reporters' table in front of the Chair before walking out of the House. Even if voting had taken place, the Opposition did not have the requisite numbers. Even before the

debate on the Bill started, Mr. O'Brien accused the government of "manufacturing majority" by suspending 12 Opposition MPs. Mr. O'Brien, who has been suspended for the remainder of the session, is the 13th Opposition MP to be suspended.

CPI's Binoy Viswam attacked the government over Mr. O'Brien's suspension.

"They began the session by suspending 12 of us. They close the session by suspending one more. What do they think about Parliament? Another silly playground for them? BJP is trying to ridicule Parliament by doing whatever the modern autocratic monarchs want to impose. Shame on them," he tweeted.

House panel to review Bill on raising marriage age of women

We are 75 years late in providing equal rights to women, says Irani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As the Lok Sabha on Tuesday sent the Bill which seeks to raise the age of marriage for women to 21 to a standing committee, Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani said the proposed legislation would ensure uniformity across all religions and communities.

“The age of marriage should be uniformly applicable to all religions, caste, creed, overriding any custom or law that seeks to discriminate against women,” Ms. Irani said while introducing the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amend-

 **The age of marriage should be uniformly applicable to all religions, caste, creed, overriding any custom or law that seeks to discriminate against women — SMRITI IRANI,**
Union Minister for Women and Child Development

This Bill will have far-reaching consequences in the country. It is an attack on personal laws and the fundamental rights in the country
E.T. MOHAMMED BASHIR,
IUML leader

Why raise the age of marriage for girls to 21 when 18-year-olds can choose a PM, be in a live-in [relationship] and have a sexual relationship?
ASADUDDIN OWAISI,
AIMIM leader

ment) Bill, 2021, in the Lok Sabha.

Ms. Irani said the Bill would also amend the Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1972; the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936; the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937; the Special Marriage Act, 1954; the Hin-

du Marriage Act, 1955; and the Foreign Marriage Act, 1956.

“We are in our democracy 75 years late in providing equal rights to men and women to enter into matrimony,” the Minister added.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

RS passes electoral reforms Bill amid Opposition protest

Trinamool's Derek O'Brien suspended for unruly behaviour

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which seeks to link the electoral rolls to the Aadhaar database, was passed in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday amid dramatic scenes which ended with the suspension of Trinamool Congress member Derek O'Brien for "unruly behaviour".

Mr. O'Brien was suspended for the remaining part of the winter session for allegedly throwing a rule book at the reporters' table after the Opposition's motion to send the legislation to a select committee for scrutiny was defeated by voice vote and a division was denied since the House was not in order. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The Opposition said the



Derek O'Brien

Bill would disenfranchise many voters and violate the right to privacy.

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said the opposition to the Bill was baseless and "only those who use bogus voters list will oppose this Bill". The Bill was brought in after consultation with the Election Commission of India (ECI), he said.

"One of the major concerns was duplicity in electoral rolls. There was no law to establish names in multi-

ple rolls and to delete those names... election process should be clean and it will be clean only if the electoral roll is clean, if I am a genuine voter, why will I oppose the Bill?" he said.

Mr. Rijiju said members had raised the *Puttaswamy* judgment of the Supreme Court. The court had said that if government intervened in privacy, there should be a justification for it. "The court said there should a law, so we have brought this law. It said there should be legitimate reason... The returning officer will be able to use Aadhaar as an identity document and that electoral database will be with the ECI and not in public domain," Mr. Rijiju clarified.

POLL BILL SCRUTINY ▶ PAGE 11

How the Code on Wages 'legalises' bonded labour

It allows employers to extend unlimited advances to workers and charge an unspecified interest rate on such loans



SOWMYA SIVAKUMAR

Debt bondage is a form of slavery that exists when a worker is induced to accept advances on wages, of a size, or at a level of interest, such that the advance will never be repaid. One of India's hastily-passed Labour Codes – the Code on Wages, 2019 – gives legal sanction to this horrifically repressive, inhuman practice, by allowing employers to extend limitless credit advances to their workers, and charge an unspecified (and hence, usurious) interest rate on them.

Despite previously existing legal protections, vulnerable agricultural, informal sector and migrant workers were already becoming trapped in a vicious cycle of mounting debt and dwindling income, stripping them, their families and future generations, of their most basic rights. It remains one of the most pernicious sources of control and bondage in India, and is incompatible with democracy.

What is shocking is that instead of preventing such enslavement of workers and protecting their fundamental rights, the present government appears to openly abet the practice, by undoing even the weakest safeguards earlier in place under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (now subsumed in the Code).

A free pass to debt bondage

Rule 21 of the Minimum Wages (Central) Rules, 1950 (corresponding to the Act) spelt out certain 'deductions' permissible from the

wages of workers. The sub-rule (2) (vi) allowed for "deductions for recovery of advances or for adjustment of over payment of wages, provided that such advances do not exceed an amount equal to wages for two calendar months of the employed person".

Additionally, it stated, "in no case, shall the monthly instalment of deduction exceed one-fourth of the wages earned in that month".

Compare this with Section 18(2) (F)(i) of the Code on Wages, which introduces two major changes to the foregoing.

This section allows deductions from wages for the recovery of "advances of whatever nature (including advances for travelling allowance or conveyance allowance), and the interest due in respect thereof, or for adjustment of overpayment of wages".

Compare this with Section 18(2) (F)(i) of the Code on Wages, which introduces two major changes to the foregoing.

Two, it has legalised the charging of an interest rate by the employer on such advances, by adding the clause on interest, and with no details on what might be charged. The net impact is an open sanction for the bonded labour system to flourish.

Moreover, the Code increases the permissible monthly deduction towards such recovery, up to one-half of the worker's monthly wage, as compared with one-fourth under the earlier Act.

Not that the presence of any law under our Constitution even before the Labour Codes – such as The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 – or various Su-



B. JOTH RAMALINGAM

preme Court judgments, have ever deterred the bonded labour system from being widespread across sectors, from agriculture to quarrying, spinning, and more.

Cases in Rajasthan

In Baran district, Rajasthan (2011-12), a series of Sahariya (a primitive tribal group) families boldly came out one after the other and spoke of their harrowing experiences of violence and even rape at the hands of Sikh, caste Hindu, and Muslim landlords, for whom they had worked as 'halis' for generations. The mostly upper-caste government officials from the Collector onwards put up a wall of resistance in acknowledging them as bonded labourers as per the Act, thereby denying them any sort of relief or rehabilitation, till pressure was mounted.

In a large-scale primary survey in a mining cluster of Nagaur district, Rajasthan for the Mine Labour Protection Campaign (2015), we found that one in three workers interviewed had taken advances from their employers ranging from ₹1,000-₹1,50,000 at the time of joining work. Of them, about 50% said they took the amount "to pay off the earlier employer or a moneylender".

But in Parliament, the existence

of bonded labour has simply been denied among elected representatives, or grossly understated.

Debt bondage and forced labour flourish because the Government has done nothing to ensure the economic security of labourers. And it is set to worsen if this labour code provision is allowed to take shape.

Need for state intervention

It is no coincidence that the disproportionate effect of this huge regression in the Labour Code will fall on Dalits and the landless. In the Nagaur study, for instance, we found that 56% of the workers were Dalits, as contrasted with only 3% of the mine owners.

The vast proportion of landless agricultural labourers in India, to date, are Dalits.

Anand Telumbde powerfully writes in *Republic of Caste*, "The dominant castes understood that if dalits came to own the means of survival, they would repudiate their servile status and its attendant social bondage... Economic independence is an aspect of liberty and its absence, as a corollary, spells slavery."

Indeed, this is exactly what B.R. Ambedkar feared would play out in India, and hoped to prevent, through his pamphlet, *States and Minorities*, released in the 1940s (see Article 2). In her Ambedkar Lecture, 2018 at the University of Edinburgh, Rupa Viswanath, Professor of Indian Religions at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen, expounds on Ambedkar's later-age line of reasoning that "what makes the translation of 'one-man-one vote' to 'one-man-one-value' possible, is the worker's economic freedom".

Ambedkar understood that economic enslavement was an extreme form of coercion that ren-

dered political freedom meaningless, and that democracy itself required state intervention in the economic structure to prevent such practices, she says.

While he proposed a complete recast of rural and agrarian land structures, and state ownership of land as crucial to this, she explains, he also defined democracy as resting on two premises that required the existence of economic rights.

The first, relevant to the present discussion on Labour Codes, was that "an individual must not be required to relinquish his Constitutional rights as a condition precedent to the receipt of any privilege". But that is exactly what the unemployed are forced to do – merely for the sake of securing the 'privilege' to work and to subsist, she notes.

Deepening inequality

The larger picture we must keep in mind, therefore, is this. Government after government, under the garb of being pro-worker, has schemed to intervene in exactly the opposite direction as desired – by maintaining and deepening economic inequality to the advantage of the privileged castes and classes, thereby keeping true political freedom out of the workers' reach. And it is this line that the Central government has pursued with even more gusto, in the recasting and passing of these retrogressive labour codes.

If the farm laws could be repealed, then these anti-labour codes, with numerous other dilutions that snatch away the mostly non-existent rights of the far more vulnerable class of workers, must surely go.

Sowmya Sivakumar is an independent writer

Stemming the onslaught of Omicron

The way forward is to vaccinate the whole population, including children, while also providing booster doses



T. JACOB JOHN & M.S. SESHADRI

After the massive second wave of COVID-19 caused by the Delta variant, India has been in the endemic phase. This is the much-awaited respite that permits further relaxation of curbs on social interactions and reopening of all educational institutions. As these are implemented in different States at different paces, India now faces the threat of an Omicron wave. Some experts seem to believe that there will not be another wave since the Omicron variant is not causing severe disease in other countries. We cannot predict whether extensive transmission of Omicron will cause a wave. For some four months there was unrestrained circulation of the Delta variant before it showed up as the second wave of disease. Omicron will take less time as it spreads faster. We did not flatten the Delta wave curve with vaccination; we must use vaccination now to block another wave. The risk of a disease wave may be small but it is not zero.

The case for booster doses

Our best defence against Omicron is to bolster population immunity with vaccination. Omicron tends to evade immunity induced by infection or two doses of the vaccine. But the evasion is partial. The higher the antibody level, the better the protection. A recent report of cross-protection showed that all convalescent sera neutralised Omicron, albeit with low titres. A booster shot of a vaccine raises antibody levels at least an order of magnitude higher than those induced by infection or two vaccine doses. That is why many countries are providing booster jabs. What we believe is that the entire population should be vaccinated with two doses, including children (as Omicron causes more infection in children than Delta), and booster doses provided for those who had their second dose six or more months earlier.

Policy-makers argue that Omicron will not cause serious illness, as initial trends suggest elsewhere, and so booster doses are unnecessary now. Everyone agrees that Omicron is spreading faster than even Delta.



NAGARA GOPAL

These observations must be seen against a background of the high prevalence of immunity in the population. Omicron's true virulence in the non-immune population will be known only in due time. Should we therefore decide against booster doses now? Do we not know that booster doses will inevitably be necessary tomorrow, if not today? So, why not administer them earlier since we know that boosted immunity lasts longer?

All those who have followed COVID-19-appropriate behaviour and stayed safe may not be spared infection from Omicron. Diabetics; cancer patients; patients with autoimmune disease, chronic cardiovascular, renal or liver diseases; those who have had organ transplants; and those aged 60+ with immune senescence face the risk of disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise a third dose for them to ensure adequate immunity. Apart from these categories of people, healthcare workers occupationally exposed to the virus are a priority. However, everyone who has taken two doses will need a booster sooner than later. If we wait for evidence on how many cases of serious disease and hospitalisation Omicron can cause, we may be too late in protecting these segments with the simple measure of administering a booster.

We know that breakthrough infection in two-dose recipients is common with Omicron. They will act as links in the chain of further transmission. We must slow down virus circulation and this can be achieved only by increasing the proportion of people who are adequately immunised.

Is there evidence that booster doses will protect us? Studies show that 70% of immunocompromised individuals show rapid increase in neutralising antibody titre with a booster

dose. A booster dose with an mRNA vaccine protects well against symptomatic disease caused by Omicron. Will vaccines in India boost immunity against COVID-19? We must assume they do, but we also need to investigate this for confirmation. All these efforts should run in parallel. It is a well-accepted principle in vaccinology that booster doses consistently and exponentially enhance immunity. To face Omicron, which is highly transmissible and has a tendency to evade low levels of immunity, we must act now. Waiting for evidence is unwise - while anticipating evidence, we should offer boosters.

A second argument against booster doses is that India should share its vaccines with countries where the vaccination programme is lagging instead of administering booster jabs for its own citizens. The government has primary responsibility towards the Indian population. And India is doing its best to fulfil its obligations to low-income countries - more so than many developed countries.

Some argue that the two-dose vaccination programme for the entire eligible population will suffer if booster doses are administered. These two objectives are not in competition. Booster doses are to be administered after a six-month interval after the second dose. There is no reason why the two-dose programme and the booster programme cannot go hand in hand, especially since vaccine supplies are sufficient.

When responding to a crisis, decisions must be made quickly, with foresight, integrity and humanity. To wait for firm evidence to emerge before taking action or to take hasty, wrong decisions will entail a price. Foresight shows the middle path. WHO is reluctant to advise boosters now as its duty is to advocate vaccine equity. We must rely on our own inte-

grity to enable us to balance our immediate needs and altruistic allocation for other countries.

Immunity is a spectrum ranging from protection from severe disease and death, to preventing even the mildest disease, to preventing infection itself. When we consider the nation's health, our humanity demands that we protect the vulnerable from risk of severe disease and death. Retarding virus circulation and even inhibiting asymptomatic infections becomes a priority. This is the rationale for offering booster doses.

On child vaccination

It is urgent that we vaccinate children, already back in schools, as a defence against Omicron. The experience in other countries warns us that children without immunity get infected causing disruptions in school and transmission in households. Even children with asymptomatic infection will carry the virus home. Further, if we vaccinate children in a well-organised school-based vaccination programme, we will reduce the size of the potential 'virus reservoir' of that unvaccinated population segment. We need to fast-track approval processes for Emergency Use Authorisation for children. That will enable the next step of recommendation by the Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. One vaccine manufacturer has made an intranasal vaccine in India. The need for it is now. Hence, its evaluation by a regulatory agency must be fast-tracked in an emergency mode.

How do we ensure that those who are immunocompromised get the booster dose? It is time that the vaccines already approved with the EUA are licensed quickly. This will enable physicians to assess the risk in individual patients and counsel them - thereby ensuring that those in need of booster jabs get them quickly.

We may be right in assuming that Omicron is relatively harmless. But we may also be wrong and the price we will pay then could be hefty. Instead, if we assume it to be ominous and take all precautions even before evidence clarifies the true picture of Omicron's behaviour, society can go back to pre-COVID normalcy sooner.

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'Digitisation push to see IT firms log 9-12% dollar revenue growth'

ICRA forecasts industry growth to moderate marginally to 6-9% in FY23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

IT services companies are expected to log dollar revenue growth of 9-12% in FY22, driven by accelerated demand for digital technologies from enterprises globally and partly on account of last year's low base due to the COVID-19 impact, ratings agency ICRA said.

Industry growth is expected to moderate marginally to 6-9% in FY23, partly also on account of the base effect, ICRA said on Tuesday.

"In line with the growth trajectory witnessed over recent quarters, Indian IT services companies are expected to report healthy growth



Techie talent: Hiring by IT companies is at an all-time high, buoyed by strong demand. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

over the near term due to aforementioned favourable factors," ICRA Assistant Vice-President and Sector Head Deepak Jotwani said.

He added that the growth had been supported by up-

tick in all key verticals such as BFSI, telecom, manufacturing, retail and distribution.

However, concerns have emanated from elevated attrition levels due to strong

demand for digital technologies and lack of adequate skilled manpower to service the same. Firms are reskilling employees to overcome this challenge.

Moreover, they have also been able to achieve higher employee productivity through increased deployment of technology.

Hiring by IT companies is at an all-time high buoyed by strong demand and net addition over past four quarters has been increasing exponentially, Mr. Jotwani noted.

ICRA said IT services companies remain focused on enhancing the share of fixed price contracts as it assures better revenue visibility.

India's crude oil output extends slide, declined 2% in November

ONGC's production fell on delays in mobilising equipment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's output of crude oil, which is refined to produce petrol and diesel, continued to decline in November, with lower output from state-owned firms leading to a more than 2% drop, official data showed on Tuesday.

Oil production in November was 2.43 million tonnes, down from 2.48 million tonnes a year earlier and 2.5 million tonnes in October.

Oil and Natural Gas Corp. (ONGC) produced 3% less crude oil at 1.6 million tonnes in November due to delays in mobilising equipment at western offshore fields. Oil India Ltd. (OIL) produced 2,41,420 tonnes of



crude oil in November, down from 2,43,200 tonnes a year earlier and 2,52,990 tonnes in October.

India is 85% reliant on imports to meet its crude oil needs as domestic output is insufficient to meet demand.

During April-November – the first eight months of the current fiscal year – crude

oil production fell 2.74% to 19.86 million tonnes. ONGC produced 4.18% less oil at 12.94 million tonnes.

Natural gas production was, however, 23% higher at 2.86 billion cubic meters (bcm) in November, mainly due to output from newer fields in the KG-D6 block, operated by Reliance Industries Ltd. and BP plc.

ONGC produced 5.28% less gas at 1.72 bcm, while the output from eastern offshore – where KG-D6 is situated – jumped 1,251% to 581.34 million cubic meters.

The data did not give individual field output.

Reliance-BP last year started gas production from newer fields in KG-D6 block.

EXPLAINER

The problems within the UDAN scheme

How has the UDAN scheme fared so far? What are the setbacks it has faced?

JAGRITI CHANDRA

The story so far: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the UDAN scheme nearly five years back with the aim to take flying to the masses. While over 400 routes have been launched by airlines, some of them have been discontinued.

What is the UDAN scheme?

The Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme is a low-cost flying scheme launched with the aim of taking flying to the masses. The first flight under UDAN was launched by Mr. Modi in April 2017. It is also known as the regional connectivity scheme (RCS) as it seeks to improve air connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 cities through revival of unused and underused airports. Airlines are awarded routes under the programme through a bidding process and are required to offer airfares at the rate of ₹2,500 per hour of flight. At least 50% of the total seats on an aircraft have to be offered at cheaper rates. In order to enable airlines to offer affordable fares they are given a subsidy from the Government for a period of three years.

The Government had also earmarked ₹4,500 crore for revival of 50 airports in



the first three years.

What is the status of the scheme?

A total of nine rounds of bidding have taken place since January 2017. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has set a target of operationalising as many as 100 unserved and underserved airports and starting at least 1,000 RCS routes by 2024. So far, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has awarded 948 routes under UDAN, of which 403 routes have taken off that connect 65 airports, which include eight heliports. Out of the total 28 seaplane routes connecting 14 water aerodromes, only two have commenced.

However, in reality, some of the routes launched have been discontinued. On Monday, Rajya Sabha MP Ramkumar Verma asked Minister of State for Civil Aviation V. K. Singh whether “most of the routes awarded under UDAN are not active”. Though the MoS declined to provide the exact number of the discontinued routes, he provided three reasons why this was happening. These included failure to set up airports or heliports due to lack of availability of land, airlines unable to start flights on routes awarded to them or finding the routes difficult to sustain, and adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the Ministry of Civil Aviation undertook interesting initiatives within the scheme to provide improved connectivity to hilly regions and islands through helicopters and seaplanes, as well as linking Assam with certain international destinations in South Asia and South East Asia, these mostly remain on paper.

What have been the challenges?

Poor financial health of many smaller, regional carriers have been a bane for the scheme. Take the example of Trujet, a Hyderabad-based airline, which was

among the most successful players under the scheme until the pandemic hit the industry. It has since seen a change in ownership, but awaits infusion of funds to be able to undertake maintenance of aircraft, pay rentals to lessors, give salaries to its staff, etc. Of its fleet size of six planes, only one plane is currently air worthy and is being used for connecting eight routes out of the total 42 won by the airline. A senior executive of the airline said that they plan to have three planes ready to fly by end of December or early January. Earlier, Air Odisha and Air Deccan which had won 84 out of 128 routes in the first round of bidding shut shop due to financial troubles and the Government reallocated these routes in subsequent rounds. “Many players don’t have more than one or two planes and they are often poorly maintained. New planes are too expensive for these smaller players. For example, Air Odisha had only two planes and if one plane is grounded due to a glitch it impacts their flights. Often, they also have problems with availability of pilots and are forced to hire foreign pilots which costs them a lot of money and makes the business unviable. So far, only those routes that have been bagged by bigger domestic players such as IndiGo and SpiceJet have seen a better success rate,” said a Government official.

“How you run the airline or how you plan the network and survive the tough competition from the bigger players determines whether you will be a successful player, with or without UDAN,”

Simran Sing Tiwana, CEO, Star Air, told *The Hindu*. “We have to compete with big airlines to get pilots and other manpower who have to be paid on par with what major carriers in the market pay even though the size of our pie is much smaller,” he added. The airline serves 34 routes under UDAN and connects 15 airports.

What lies ahead for the scheme?

The Government offers subsidy for a route for a period of three years and expects the airline to develop the route during this time so that it becomes self-sufficient. But take the example of Kadapa-Hyderabad which was launched by Mr. Modi along with Delhi-Simla in 2017. Trujet stopped connecting Kadapa and Hyderabad once the tenure of the subsidy expired. A top airline executive said on the condition of anonymity, “we have stopped the routes that have completed three years. This is because of non-availability of aircraft and because of pressure on us to launch routes in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.” Airlines like Trujet have sought an extension of the subsidy period by two years. Similarly, the only seaplane flight launched remains suspended. SpiceJet’s seaplane flight from Statue of Unity in Kevadiya to Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad was launched in October last year by the Prime Minister and saw a few flights till April but has since been suspended “due to rise in COVID cases, travel restrictions and keeping passenger safety in mind,” said an airline spokesperson.

THE GIST

■ The UDAN scheme is a low-cost flying scheme with the aim of taking flying to the masses. Airlines are awarded routes under the programme through a bidding process and are required to offer half of the airfares at the rate of ₹2,500 per hour of flight.

■ So far, the AAI has awarded 948 routes under UDAN, of which 403 routes have taken off that connect 65 airports and 8 heliports. However, some of the routes launched have discontinued. The MoS stated that this was because of the failure to set up airports due to lack of availability of land, airlines finding the routes difficult to sustain, and adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Poor financial health of many smaller, regional carriers have been a bane for the scheme.

'5G today is akin to WiFi; will change in 2022'

Dell CTO Roese sees availability of more modern versions of 5G altering outlook

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

Today's 5G is not significantly different or better than WiFi in most use cases, but this will change soon as more modern, capable versions of 5G become available to enterprises in 2022 and beyond, said John Roese, Global Chief Technology Officer, Dell Technologies.

"Markets are expected to see higher performance and more scalable 5G along with new features such as Ultra Reliable Low Latency Communications (URLLC) and Massive Machine Type Communications (mMTC), with dialogue becoming much more dominant than traditional telecommunications,"



John Roese

Mr. Roese explained.

Enterprise use of 5G was still early, he said, adding that the opening of the private mobility ecosystem would accelerate with more cloud and IT industries involved on the path to 5G.

"We are living in a do-everything-from-anywhere

economy, enabled by an exponentially expanding data ecosystem," he observed. "It's estimated 65% of global GDP will be digital in 2022."

'Dialogues about edge'

He expects the dialogues around edge computing to split into two: edge platforms that provide a stable pool of secure capacity for the diverse edge ecosystems, and software defined edge workloads/software stacks that extend application and data systems into real world environments.

Edge is a distributed computing paradigm that helps bring computation and storage closer to the data sources, improving response

times and saving bandwidth.

As corporates extend public and private cloud data and application pipelines to the edge along with local IoT and data management edges, they can be delivered as software-defined packages leveraging the common edge platform of IT capacity, explained Mr. Roese.

"This means that your edge workloads can evolve and change at software speed because the underlying platform is a common pool of stable capacity," he said, adding that the industry was already witnessing such a shift.

In 2022, "we expect these platforms to become more capable and pervasive."

Beautification initiative to discourage dumping of garbage

KAPMI to launch 25th weekend lake clean up this Sunday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Volunteers of the Korattur Aeri Pathukappu Makkal Iyakkam (KAPMI) started painting walls of Chennai High School in Ellaiyamman Nagar, Korattur on Tuesday aiming at preventing dumping of garbage in the area.

A group of students from Government College of Fine Arts, headed by K.Swetha, turned the walls into their canvas and brought alive some scenes from daily life. Members of the KAPMI noted that it was not only an initiative for beautification of the school compound, but also to discourage residents from using the site as a makeshift dumpyard.

KAPMI's secretary S.Sekaran said the initiative was taken up with the support of Greater Chennai Corporation. The citizens' group is also identifying such spaces in Korattur, which are vul-



Changing wallscape: Volunteers of KAPMI painting walls of Chennai High School in Korattur. ■ K. PICHUMANI

nerable to such problems posing threat to public sanitation. There are plans to carry out more such beautification initiatives in the area and improve sanitation.

Moreover, KAPMI plans to launch the 25th weekend Korattur lake clean up this Sunday, and plant saplings along the bund. "Our volunteers usually remove 15-20 bags of trash, including bottles and plastics, from the

lake periphery. But, the lake has accumulated more waste during the heavy downpour last month," Mr. Sekaran said.

Though several parts of the lake is covered with water hyacinth, it is also home to numerous birds, attracting many visitors. "We have planted nearly 400 saplings so far. But, maintaining them is becoming a challenge," he added.

General Studies Paper I

A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies

General Studies Paper II

A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
K	Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies;
L	Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies;
M	Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
N	Salient features of the Representation of People's Act;
O	Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;
P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
Q	Issues relating to poverty and hunger,
R	Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes;
S	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources;
T	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health
General Studies Paper III	
A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
D	Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting;
E	Land reforms in India
F	Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems;
G	Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints;
H	e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing.
I	Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping;
J	Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management;
K	Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices
L	Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology;
M	Indigenization of technology and developing new technology;
N	Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;
O	Issues relating to intellectual property rights
P	Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
Q	Disaster and disaster management
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;

T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
General Studies Paper IV	
A	Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;
B	Dimensions of ethics;
C	Ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;
D	Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.
E	Attitude: Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour;
F	Moral and political attitudes;
G	Social influence and persuasion.
H	Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service , integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.
I	Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
J	Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
K	Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems;
L	Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions;
M	Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as
N	sources of ethical guidance;
O	Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding;
P	Corporate governance.
Q	Probity in Governance: Concept of public service;
R	Philosophical basis of governance and probity;
S	Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.
T	Case Studies on above issues.