

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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# India, Russia hold discussion on UN Security Council agenda

## Moscow to assume Presidency of Council in February

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

Ahead of Russia's upcoming Presidency of the United Nations Security Council this month, India and Russia on Monday held consultations on the UNSC issues during the visit of Ambassador Sergey Vasilyevich Vershinin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (DFM) of the Russian Federation. The discussion came in the backdrop of tensions between Russia and Ukraine over possible eastward expansion by NATO.

"The Russian delegation briefed India on its priorities

during the 76th session of the U.N. General Assembly. Both sides also agreed to work closely together, given the common challenges faced and in keeping with their long standing special and privileged strategic partnership," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

Both sides held wide-ranging discussions on issues on the UNSC agenda and related developments. They agreed to deepen cooperation on issues of mutual interest at multilateral platforms. India has main-

tained a cautious position over the military tension bordering eastern Ukraine where Russia has rushed around a lakh additional soldiers and heavy armaments in the past weeks.

Official spokesperson of the Ministry Arindam Bagchi said last week India supports "peaceful resolution" of the crisis through "sustained diplomatic efforts". Apart from close strategic ties with both Russia and Ukraine, India is also concerned about the wellbeing of a large number of its citizens who are resident in Ukraine.

## EXPLAINER

# The limits of the legislature's power to suspend a member

Can a lawmaker be suspended beyond one session? Is a one-year ban from the House legal?

K. VENKATARAMANAN

**The story so far:** Last week, the Supreme Court declared as grossly illegal and irrational the suspension of 12 BJP legislators for one year by the Maharashtra Assembly for disorderly conduct. Brushing aside objections that the judiciary should not examine the validity of the proceedings of the House, a three-judge Bench, comprising Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice C.T. Ravikumar, ruled that the suspension beyond the term of the particular session in which it was imposed was a nullity in the eyes of the law.

### What happened on July 5, 2021?

There was a ruckus in the Assembly when the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government introduced a resolution seeking empirical data on OBCs from the Union government. The House was adjourned briefly for a few times before the resolution was passed, as BJP members rushed to the well of the House and were accused of damaging the presiding officer's microphone and grabbing the mace. Later, Bhaskar Jadhav, a Shiv Sena MLA who was in the Chair during the incidents, said that when he was in the Deputy Speaker's chamber, some members rushed inside and abused him. A resolution moved by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister was subsequently adopted by the House suspending 12 MLAs — Dr. Sanjay Kate, Ashish Shelar, Abhimanyu Pawar, Girish Mahajan, Atul Bhatkalkar, Harish Pimple, Jaykumar Rawal, Yogesh Sagar, Narayan Kuche, Bunty Bhangdiya, Parag Alavani and Ram Satpute. They were barred from entering the legislative premises for 12 months. The members challenged their suspension in the Supreme Court.

### How did the State government defend the action?

Counsel for the State government argued that there is no limitation on the power of the legislature to punish for breach of privilege or disorderly conduct in the course of its proceedings. Once the power to punish a member for disorderly conduct is recognised, there can be no judicial review of the manner in which it is exercised. Under

Rule 53 of the Maharashtra Assembly Rules, the Speaker could direct a Member to withdraw from the Assembly for disorderly conduct for the day, or the remainder of the Session. However, there is no such limitation when the whole House decides to impose suspension.

In this context, counsel contended that when the power to expel a member is available, the power to suspend, being a lesser punishment, is also available to the House at all times.

The Bench had raised a question as to how any suspension can go beyond 60 days, in the light of Article 190(4) of the Constitution, which says the House could declare a seat vacant if a member is absent for 60 days. The State government contended that in such a case, it is the House that declares the seat vacant, and it is not an automatic consequence of a member's absence for 60

**The Bench had raised a question as to how any suspension can go beyond 60 days, in the light of Article 190(4) of the Constitution, which says the House could declare a seat vacant if a member is absent for 60 days.**

days on which the House met.

The Government also pointed out that in Raja Ram Pal (2007), the Supreme Court had upheld the expulsion of 12 MPs in the cash-for-questions scandal. When expulsion, the greater punishment was allowed, suspension, being a lesser penalty, cannot be questioned.

### What are the reasons given by the court for its ruling?

The Bench noted that Rule 53 showed a 'graded approach' to the issue of disorderly behaviour, an initial suspension for a day, and then for the remainder of the session, but nothing beyond it. It was a power to be exercised only for the protection of the proceedings.

However, in the present case, there was no separate provision for the House to impose a lengthy suspension. If at all it was exercising inherent powers to regulate its proceedings, it ought to have adopted a 'graded approach'



and limited its suspension to the immediate objective of ensuring order. Once the length of the suspension went beyond the session, it ceased to be a disciplinary measure, but partook the character of a punitive action. Citing Privy Council cases and Indian precedents, the Bench said anything that went beyond the session was irrational and grossly illegal.

The Bench also cited provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, that say any vacancy in the House has to be filled up through a by-election within six months of its occurrence.

It ruled that a one-year suspension meant that the constituency concerned would go without representation in the Assembly for a whole year.

Further, suspension seemed to have worse consequences than outright expulsion from the legislature, as a by-election will be held within six months; whereas, a one-year

suspension does not entail mandatory filling up of the vacancy.

### What general principles arise from the case?

The court has reiterated the principle that even though the judiciary will not interfere in the functioning of the legislature, a coordinate body, it is not deprived of the power of judicial review if there is a violation of the Constitution.

Even though there were no prescribed limits to the privileges of the House, there is no doubt that these are subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

A lengthy suspension, apart from the deprivation of representation for the constituents, may also be detrimental to democracy, as it could be used to manipulate numbers in the legislature, and deny the opposition the opportunity to participate effectively in debates.

## THE GIST

■ Last week, the Supreme Court declared as grossly illegal and irrational the suspension of 12 BJP legislators for one year by the Maharashtra Assembly for disorderly conduct.

■ The State counsel argued that under Rule 53 of the Maharashtra Assembly Rules, the Speaker could direct a Member to withdraw from the Assembly for disorderly conduct for the day, or the remainder of the Session. However, there is no such limitation when the whole House decides to impose suspension. They also stated that once the power to punish a member for disorderly conduct is recognised, there can be no judicial review of the manner in which it is exercised.

■ The Bench noted that Rule 53 showed a 'graded approach' to the issue of disorderly behaviour, an initial suspension for a day, and then for the remainder of the session, but nothing beyond it. Once the length of the suspension goes beyond the session, it ceases to be a disciplinary measure and undertakes the character of punitive action. A lengthy suspension, apart from the deprivation of representation for the constituents, may also be detrimental to democracy.

# Pegasus sub judice, no need for Parliament debate: govt.

Opposition calls for statement from PM on reports of spyware purchase; Venkaiah appeals for a productive session

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Amid Opposition demands for a discussion on the Pegasus spyware issue, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday said the issue is *sub judice* and there need not be a separate discussion on the issue in the Budget session of Parliament.

At an all-party meeting convened virtually by the government, several Opposition leaders suggested that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should give a statement on the issue, if a full-fledged discussion is not possible. There was, however, no assurance forthcoming from Mr. Joshi or any other government representative.

Mr. Joshi, however, said that members can raise any issue while speaking on the Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address to the joint sitting of both Houses. Floor leaders of 25 parties attended the meeting in which the government was represented by Defence Minister and Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha Rajnath Singh.

The government's stance set the stage for a confrontation between the Opposition and Treasury benches as a number of senior Opposition leaders like Congress's Rajya Sabha member K.C. Venugopal have moved a privilege motion against Information Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for "misleading the House".

Senior Opposition mem-



**All set:** President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla arriving to attend the Budget session on Monday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

bers, including Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Trinamool Congress leader Sudeep Bandopadhyaya, and DMK's T.R. Baalu, raised the Pegasus issue at the Business

Advisory Committee (BAC) of the Lok Sabha and conveyed their intention to raise it on the floor of the House.

However, the BAC, chaired by Speaker Om Birla, allotted 12 hours to discuss

the Motion of Thanks to the President and another 12 hours for the discussion on the Budget. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to reply to the Motion of Thanks by next Monday (February 7).

"Leaders of all parties promised that in this important Budget Session, they will cooperate in running Parliament. I also urged them that extensive discussion can be held on President's Address and Budget. We can raise issues of the nation and discussions can be held," Mr. Birla told reporters after the BAC meeting.

**Meaningful contribution** Separately, Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Nai-

du held a virtual meeting of the floor leaders to decide on the business of the House for the next 10 days.

Apart from Zero Hour, Question Hour and Private Members' Business, 23 hours will be available to have two separate discussions on the Motion of Thanks and the Union Budget. There will be no legislative business in the first part of the Budget session that ends on February 11.

Appealing to the floor leaders, Mr. Naidu said, "The Budget session provides guidance to help the national economy recover from the impact of pandemic. I earnestly appeal to all the leaders to enable a productive Budget session."

# The case for vaccinating children against COVID-19

Protecting all children, especially those who have risk factors, should be a humanitarian priority for the Government



**DR. DHANYA DHARMAPALAN & T. JACOB JOHN**

There is a general misconception that vaccination ought to be reserved against diseases that cause death in large numbers. COVID-19 is generally a mild disease in the large majority of healthy young children infected with SARS-CoV-2.

However, children living with diabetes, chronic heart/lung/kidney/neurological diseases, obesity, and with an immunocompromised state due to immunodeficiency syndromes or immunosuppressant therapies are at high risk of severe disease, need for hospitalisation and expensive treatments, even of mortality. Older children and adolescents have a higher risk of severe COVID-19, approximating adult risk levels. All such children deserve COVID-19 vaccination to preserve good quality of life.

## MIS and diabetes

Four to six weeks after COVID-19, irrespective of severity, some among otherwise healthy children develop Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS). Statistics available in India showed 5% mortality among 800 children hospitalised for MIS; more than half required intensive care and prolonged hospital stay. Without a national regis-

try of MIS, we do not know its real burden. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 91% protective effectiveness of two doses of Pfizer's mRNA vaccine against MIS in children 12 to 18 years. COVID-19 vaccination prevents MIS.

Another post-COVID-19 disease in adults and children is diabetes, starting within weeks. In a report from the CDC on 80,893 children (below 18 years), the incidence of post-COVID-19 diabetes was 31 per 10,000 versus control, 11.8/10,000 after other respiratory infections. India already has a heavy burden of diabetes in children. COVID-19 vaccination will prevent post-COVID-19 diabetes.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's COVID dashboard (January 13, 2022), showed 16,426 total deaths, of which 19 were in children below 10, and 43 in children between 10 and 18 years (total of 62 or 0.38%). January data from UNICEF show that 0.4% of a total 3.5 million COVID-19 deaths were in children and adolescents. India's reported deaths were 4.86 lakh till January 17, 2022 – child deaths at 0.4% rate would amount to 1,944. Independent analysis by expert epidemiologists (*Science*, January 6, 2022) estimated a six to seven-fold higher number of deaths, suggesting a far higher number of child deaths.

## Other factors

It is estimated that 2,00,000 children are born with congenital heart defects every year in India. New cases of cancer in children are about 50,000 per year. A huge

GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO



number of children have neurological disorders. As in a United Nations estimate, about 40 million in India are disabled due to various diseases, among whom over 7% are children. India has the second highest number of obese children in the world (-14.4 million). The burden of childhood nephrotic syndrome annually is about 1,40,000. Sickle cell disease is highly prevalent in the tribal populations in India. The Indian Society for Primary Immune Deficiency estimates that over a million children have primary immune deficiency disease. These are all conditions that are known as risk factors for severe COVID-19. Protecting them with COVID-19 vaccination is a humanitarian priority.

India's third COVID-19 wave began from December 28, 2021. On January 3, 2022, children above 14 years are allowed vaccination, undoubtedly a step in the right direction. They become eligible for the second dose four weeks later – thus, children are not getting the benefit of protection during the present wave. Although we have not been able to protect children with vaccination so far, the Government of India must now plan

for protection against the inevitable future endemic COVID-19. Paediatricians caring for children with the above listed conditions associated with high risk of COVID-19 and its complications, need approval to protect them with vaccination.

SARS-CoV-2 (except the Omicron variant) invades many body tissues and organs. Damage to the pancreas is the reason for new onset diabetes. COVID-19 is a new disease and the extent of damage to the health of children will be known only in due course. All facts considered, rolling out vaccination with vaccine(s) of assured safety is the right way forward.

## Vaccine safety

Since the risks of severe COVID-19, its related complications and mortality are much higher in adults, a risk-benefit comparison has so far favoured vaccination, even with vaccines with some known serious adverse reactions. Globally, both mRNA vaccines and Adenovirus vectored vaccines are recognised to cause some specific and defined diseases that need to be immediately diagnosed and treated in order to prevent mortality.

Since risk of COVID-19 severity is low in children, only vaccines with little or no risks of serious adverse reactions are justified in them. Thus, vaccine safety is the most crucial criterion for approval. Fortunately, the indigenous inactivated virus vaccine with adjuvant promoting cell-mediated and antibody arms of immunity had been investigated for safety in children at and above two years, and

found to be safe without any serious adverse reaction. Obviously for this reason the Government has allowed it for exclusive use in children between 15 and 18 years. We argue for vaccinating younger children also with the same vaccine.

The urgency for vaccination is the continued high risk of disease, complications and death in children who, on account of their chronic diseases or prolonged treatments are vulnerable. Selective vaccination of high-risk groups will not be feasible under the emergency use approval (EUA) of vaccines in children. Once safe vaccines are licensed for general use, health-care givers can vaccinate selected children under their care.

## Age of eligibility

As of now, the ethical, scientifically sound and wise decision ought to be step-wise lowering of age of eligibility: first to above 12 years, then to above five years and eventually to above two years, in rapid succession, ensuring safety in each age group. Expanding the age range for EUA of the vaccine does not necessarily mean that all families may opt for their otherwise healthy children to be vaccinated. However, without EUA, children who need prophylaxis against COVID-19 will continue to be denied the benefit of vaccination.

*Dr. Dhanya Dharmapalan is a paediatric infectious diseases specialist in Navi Mumbai. Dr. T. Jacob John is a former (retired) Professor of Virology, Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu*

# A hazy picture on employment in India

The trends in employment have not shown any clear and consistent patterns over the years



RAMESH CHAND & JASPAL SINGH

The two important indicators of structural transformation in any economy are rates of growth and changes in the structural composition of output and the workforce. India has experienced fairly consistent changes in the first indicator, especially after the 1991 reforms, but the trend in employment has not revealed any consistent or clear pattern.

The growth rate of the economy, measured by gross value added (GVA) at constant prices, accelerated from 4.27% in the 20 years before the economic reforms to 6.34% in the 20 years following the reforms and to 6.58% between 2010-11 and 2019-20 at 2011-12 prices. This growth trajectory was accompanied by a steady decline in the share of agriculture from 30% in 1990-91 to 18% in 2019-20 and a steady increase in the share of non-agriculture output in total economic output.

## Employment patterns

But when it comes to deciphering trends in employment pattern in India, there are wide variations in the conclusions drawn by experts and studies on employment. This is partly due to economical, sociological and technological factors that have brought about changes in the workforce and employment and partly due to gaps in data on various aspects of employment.

Two major sources of data on workforce and employment have been the decennial population census and the nationwide quinquennial surveys on employment and unemployment by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The last available data from the Census refer to 2011. Similarly, the quinquennial NSSO data on employment and unemployment are available up to 2011-12. This was replaced by the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), started in 2017-18 on an annual basis. The PLFS data set is now available for three consecutive years i.e., 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. The PLFS is based on a different sampling frame-



RITU RAJ KUMHAR

work and uses a different analytical approach vis-a-vis NSSO surveys on employment. As a result, the time series data on employment and unemployment available from NSSO surveys are not comparable with PLFS data. At best, the NSSO data can be used as a reference point.

Though the PLFS data cannot be used to infer an underlying trend, as they are available only for three years, they can be used to reveal the effect of various policies and developments during the current NDA regime as well as to understand and shape the employment scenario based on concrete statistics.

PLFS data show an increase in the worker to population (WPR) ratio from 34.7% in 2017-18 to 38.2% in 2019-20. This is a reversal of the previous trend which showed a decline in WPR after 2004-05. The change also implies that employment has increased at a much faster rate than growth in population. The increase in WPR has been reported in the rural and urban population and in the male and female population. This increase in WPR is even more significant as it has occurred in the midst of an increase in the labour force participation rate.

It is interesting to note that the data from the PLFS surveys do not support the assertion that women are going out of the workforce. Female WPR ratio increased from 17.5% to 24% between 2017-18 and 2019-20. When this ratio is multiplied by the female population, it shows an annual increase of 17% of women workers. Another positive indication from PLFS data is that the gap between the male and female worker participation rate is narrowing down. As against 100 male workers, there were 32 female workers in the workforce

in 2017-18. This number increased to 40 in 2019-20. Women constituted 24% of the workforce in the country in 2017-18 and 28.8% in 2019-20.

Also, the unemployment rate in the female labour force in rural areas is far lower than the male labour force, whereas the opposite holds true in urban areas. This is despite the fact that the female labour force participation rate in rural India is 33% higher than the rate in urban areas. The reason could be that there is less gender discrimination in informal jobs, which dominate rural areas, than in the formal sector which dominates urban areas.

## The unemployment scenario

PLFS data show that the unemployment rate based on principal status plus subsidiary status declined from 6.1% in 2017-18 to 4.8% in 2019-20. This shows that the number of jobs increased at a faster rate than the increase in the number of job seekers between 2017-18 and 2019-20. But despite this, the number of unemployed persons has increased by 2.3 million between 2017-18 and 2018-19, mainly because of an increase in the number of job seekers (52.8 million) in these two years.

The sectoral composition of the workforce shows that 45.6% of the workers in India are engaged in agriculture and allied activities, 30.8% in services and 23.7% in industry. According to PLFS data, there is no increase in the share of industry and services in total employment. This means that the labour shift out of agriculture is not happening. Between 2019-20 and 2017-18, 56.4 million new jobs were created. Out of this, 57.4% were created in the agriculture and allied sectors, 28.5% in services and 14.5% in industry. With-

in the broad industry group, employment in the manufacturing sector showed a meagre increase of 1.8 million in two years; and construction activity added 6.4 million new jobs.

That a majority of the new entrants to the labour force between 2017-18 and 2019-20 got absorbed in the agriculture sector has serious implications. The young labour force, which is getting increasingly educated, sought more remunerative work outside agriculture but only a few succeeded. This is because the industry and services sectors have adopted capital-intensive and, in many cases, labour-displacing technologies and production strategies. This is getting further aggravated with the rising adoption of modern technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things. This raises a big question about the future of new entrants into the labour force.

That there is a dichotomy between the rising share of industry and services in national income without a sizeable increase in employment share is a fairly well-established fact for post-liberalisation India. This puts a serious question mark on the relevance of conventional models of economic growth and development (like the dual-sector model of Arthur Lewis centred on the large-scale shift of the labour force from agriculture to industry. Perhaps it is pertinent to question the conventional economic development models and their applicability for emerging economies like India. Instead, should we rethink our strategy of striving for an industry-led growth model and explore a more relevant agri-centric model of economic transformation to create more attractive, more remunerative and more satisfying employment in and around agriculture?

Besides this there is also an urgent need to generate much more employment in the manufacturing and services sector compared to the number of jobs they have offered in the recent past. This should include (i) changes in labour laws which discourage industry to adopt labour-intensive production (ii) employment-linked production incentives and; (iii) special assistance for labour-intensive economic activities.

Ramesh Chand is Member of NITI Aayog and Jaspal Singh is Consultant at NITI Aayog. Views are personal

# 'Creating jobs via infra investments'

## Sanyal seeks to allay concerns

**YUTHIKA BHARGAVA**  
NEW DELHI

Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal on Monday sought to allay concerns over rising unemployment and asserted that the economy was creating a significant amount of new jobs. The government, he added, was also creating jobs through capital expenditure on infrastructure and providing job support via the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

"There are areas where the public sector is generating jobs, it may not be government jobs but when you are talking about capital expenditure on infrastructure, that is also a job created by government spending, the contractors' workers may not be government employees, so there is that kind of job being created, and then you know support jobs like the MGNREGA are also forms of government jobs," Mr. Sanyal said in reply to a query on lack of job creation in the public sector. He added that for a 'regular government job' there had always been a lot of demand in India. "This is not a new phenomenon ... such incidents have happened in the past as well, well before COVID-type situation."

The comments come amid ongoing controversy over recruitment in the Railways in which more than one crore applications were received for about 30,000 jobs. "There has been an attraction in India for regular government jobs and we have always heard, even in my childhood, that so many lakh people apply for so few numbers of jobs, so this is



🌀 **The international situation is in an environment where there are all kinds of pressures, particularly from oil prices**

**SANJEEV SANYAL**  
Principal Economic Adviser

not a new phenomenon at all," he said.

On inflation, Mr. Sanyal asserted that despite a spike worldwide, inflation in India was still within the tolerance threshold.

"The international situation is clearly in an environment where there are all kinds of pressures, particularly from oil prices... supply side shocks, chip shortages, cargo tariffs, etc. So these do have an impact. We are part of the world and imported inflation is an issue and we do need to take that into account," he said.

Mr. Sanyal, however, added that the rest of the world was also in some ways responding to it. "It's not like they are not doing it as well ... A lot of effort is being put worldwide in trying to ease up all these supply side problems ... don't think of these things in linear fashion. Yes, there is a problem with imported inflation, but don't begin to sort of extrapolate this into the future."

# Survey pegs growth at 8-8.5% in '22-23

■ Forecast assumes oil prices at \$70-75, no pandemic disruptions

■ Growth estimate a conservative projection, says CEA Nageswaran

■ Concerns remain over hardening inflation, liquidity woes

VIKAS DHOOT  
NEW DELHI

India's GDP is expected to grow by 9.2% this year and 8% to 8.5% in 2022-23, though hardening inflation and energy prices along with tightening of global liquidity pose a challenge, according to the Economic Survey for 2021-22 tabled by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Monday.

Newly appointed Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran termed the 8%-8.5% GDP growth estimate for the coming year as a conservative projection.

## Caveats

The growth range hinges on assumptions that "there will be no further debilitating pandemic related economic disruption, monsoon will be normal, withdrawal of global liquidity by major central banks will be broadly orderly, oil prices will be in the range of \$70-\$75/barrel, and global supply chain disruptions will steadily ease over the course of the year".

While last year's Economic Survey talked of a V-shaped recovery for India's COVID-hit economy, there is no mention of that aspect or the shape of the recovery in this year's 442-page document.

Responding to queries on the V-shaped recovery, Prin-



## Future tense

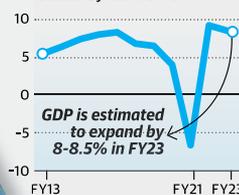
While the Finance Ministry expects India's economic recovery to continue despite the third COVID-19 wave, its report expressed concerns regarding the recent rise in inflation and surge in crude prices

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the eve of Budget day in Parliament, on Monday.

■ PTI

### PREDICTED GROWTH

India's real GDP is expected to grow by 9.2% in FY22, compared with the 6.6% contraction in FY21 due to the national lockdown induced by COVID-19



GDP is estimated to expand by 8-8.5% in FY23

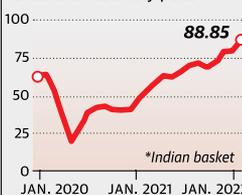
### PERSISTENT INFLATION

The wholesale inflation (WPI) remained above 10% for the ninth consecutive month in Dec. 2021. Retail inflation (CPI) accelerated to a five-month high of 5.6%



### PRICEY FUEL

The price of crude oil\* is moving closer to the \$90/barrel mark. Given the high excise duty, the retail price of fuel is expected to rise further after the Assembly polls



cipal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal, who steered this Survey, said the sharp contraction after the national lockdown was followed by a sharp revival in the second half of 2020-21 followed by some disruption due to the second COVID wave last April followed by yet another uptick.

Doodling a sort of 'W' shape in the air, he said it was up to observers to "decide what letter of the alphabet we prefer to use" to depict the recovery.

Mr. Nageswaran said the theme of the Survey was in line with the policies pursued by the government of providing short-term support to vulnerable sectors while keeping an eye on the medium term

## INSIDE

MGNREGA demand dropped from June 2020 peak **PAGE 10**

Fortified rice supply in government schools raised **PAGE 10**

Data lacking to assess pandemic's impact on learning **PAGE 10**

fiscal health and undertaking process as well as supply side reforms.

While the 9.2% growth estimate for 2021-22 suggests a recovery above the pre-pandemic level of 2019-20 by 1.3%, private consumption and segments such as travel, trade and hotels are yet to fully recover, as per the Survey. "The stop-start nature of re-

peated pandemic waves makes it especially difficult for these sub-sectors to gather momentum," it said.

"Latest advance estimates suggest full recovery of all components on the demand side in 2021-22 except for private consumption. When compared to pre-pandemic levels, recovery is most significant in exports followed by government consumption and gross fixed capital formation," the Survey added.

India's investment to GDP ratio has hit 29.6% in 2021-22, the highest level in seven years, the Survey said, attributing this capital formation to the government's policy thrust on quickening the 'virtuous cycle of growth via capex and infrastructure spend-

ing' has increased capital formation in the economy.

The Survey acknowledged the risks that have emerged at the time it was being written, such as Omicron, the new COVID-19 variant, sweeping across the world, inflation jumping up in most countries, and the cycle of liquidity withdrawal being initiated by major central banks.

"Growth in 2022-23 will be supported by widespread vaccine coverage, gains from supply-side reforms and easing of regulations, robust export growth, and availability of fiscal space to ramp up capital spending," it said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT IGNORED: OPPOSITION ► PAGE 8

# Survey pegs growth at 8-8.5% in '22-23

“The year ahead is also well poised for a pick-up in private sector investment with the financial system in a good position to provide support to the revival of the economy,” the economic research division of the Department of Economic Affairs noted in the Survey.

It highlighted that India’s macro-economic stability indicators on the external front, fiscal front as well as financial sector health and inflation, are well-placed to take on the challenges of 2022-23. ‘One of the reasons’ for this comfortable position, the Survey argued, is the government’s unique response strategy that didn’t ‘pre-commit to a rigid response’ but ‘opted to use safety-nets for vulnerable sections’ based on information.

“Inflation has reappeared as a global issue in both advanced and emerging economies.... India does need

to be wary of imported inflation, especially from elevated global energy prices,” the Survey has noted, even as it suggests that the double-digit wholesale price inflation in recent months will ‘even out’. However, an equally strong recovery was seen in imports, rendering India’s net exports negative for the first half of the year, from a surplus in 2020-21.

India has thus recorded a modest current account deficit of 0.2% in the first half, but robust capital flows in the form of continued inflow of foreign investment were sufficient to finance it, the Survey pointed out.

Taking on criticism that the ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat approach’ marks ‘a return to old school protectionism’, the Survey stated that “...the focus on economic resilience is a pragmatic recognition of the vagaries of international supply-chains”.

# ‘Vaccination was key to reviving economy’

Was essential to balance lives and livelihoods: DEA

**BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN**  
NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 pandemic posed the challenge of balancing livelihoods while saving lives, the Department of Economic Affairs said in the Economic Survey, tabled in the Parliament on Monday. It highlighted that vaccination played a critical role in minimising the loss of lives, boosted confidence in the economy for resumption of activity and contained the sequential decline in output due to the second wave.

With the global economy continuing to be plagued by uncertainty two years into the pandemic, with resurgent waves of mutant variants, supply-chain disruptions, and a return of inflation in both advanced and emerging economies,



**Restoring confidence:** The immunisation programme helped address the challenge of saving lives. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

the DEA stressed that vaccination had served as more than a health response and was critical in helping reopen the economy, particularly contact-intensive services.

Therefore, it should be treated for now as a macro-economic indicator, it said. According to data in the Survey, 99% of the registered healthcare workers and

100% of frontline workers, 87% of the population aged between 18-44, 95% of the population aged between 45-60 and 89% of the population above 60 had been covered under the first dose.

## ‘Social infrastructure’

The DEA observed that a strong and resilient social infrastructure became even

more important during the pandemic.

“To save lives and livelihoods amid the COVID-crisis, countries have adopted various strategies. India, the country with the second-largest population and a large elderly population, adopted a multi-pronged approach,” it said.

Given the nature of the pandemic, the health response, including vaccination strategy, remained critical. India, one of the young nations in the world, also faced the challenge to sustain the learning outcomes in schools, building skills and reskilling the population and ensuring employment and livelihood to one of the largest labour forces in the world.

The government’s response through ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ packages and other sector specific initiatives provided the necessary support to mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic, it asserted.

| 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 <sup>th</sup> century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawal 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.  |
|                                 |  |
| <b>General Studies Paper IV</b> |  |
| 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.  |