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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.

CONTENTS

- Editorials - An enduring agreement bridging India-Pakistan ties GSP 01 A
- Editorials - Rajasthan reels under relentless heatwave GSP 01 M
- News - CAA will not help us Bangladesh leader GSP 02 A
- News - ECB gears up to raise rates to fight inflation GSP 02 C
- News - U.S. attempting to add fuel to the fire China GSP 02 C
- Editorials - Messy battle GSP 02 E
- News - Is tying the knot a way to untangle even grievous cases GSP 02 I
- News - Presidential polls scheduled for July 18 Part I GSP 02 K
- News - Presidential polls scheduled for July 18 Part II GSP 02 K
- News - 'IISc, Bengaluru top Indian varsity GSP 02 S

- 
- News - 'CAD likely hit a 3-year high of \$43.8 bn GSP 03 A
 - News - Biotech sector grew 8 fold Modi GSP 03 A
 - News - Rated firms have buffers to bear 10-15% rupee depreciation GSP 03 A
 - News - Is the ban on wheat exports good policy GSP 03 I
 - News - The Indian patent regime and its clash with the U.S. norms GSP 03 O
 - News - Rhino reintroduction a hit in Assam reserve GSP 03 P
 - Demilitarise Aegean islands Erdogan Misc.
 - Thailand becomes first Asian country to legalise Marijuana Misc.
- 

An enduring agreement bridging India-Pakistan ties

Despite differences, the Indus Waters Treaty is one of most effective examples of water management in the world



MUKESH KUMAR SRIVASTAVA

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is an established water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan to use water in the Indus and its tributaries. In the words of former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower, the treaty has since its existence in 1960, served as “one bright spot ... in a very depressing world picture that we see so often”, resolving the long-standing differences between India and Pakistan since Partition.

Following the 118th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) comprising the Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan held on May 30-31, 2022 in New Delhi, it is important to reflect on the struggles and the high stakes that the two countries have experienced to ensure a long-lasting treaty on the one hand and the lessons that can be drawn to address multiple concerns pending in the region on the other.

Struggles and stakes

After years of arduous negotiations, the Indus Waters Treaty was signed in Karachi on September 19, 1960, by then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then Pakistani President Ayub Khan, negotiated by the World Bank. The treaty establishes a cooperative mechanism for exchanging information between the two countries

regarding the use of the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) allocated to Pakistan and the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) allocated to India. However, the treaty also underlines provisions allowing each country to use the rivers allocated to the other for certain purposes such as irrigation and hydroelectricity. The Permanent Indus Commission, which has a commissioner from each country, oversees the cooperative mechanism and ensures that the two countries meet annually (alternately in India and Pakistan) to discuss myriad issues emerging from the treaty. This year, the commission met twice, in March in Islamabad, Pakistan, and then in New Delhi, in May.

Some differences

India-Pakistan relations have most often been embroiled in the high politics of the region's history resulting in a political stalemate between the two countries. It is a rare feat that despite the many lows in India-Pakistan relations, talks under the treaty have been held on a regular basis.

Nonetheless, throughout its existence, there have been many occasions during which differences between the two countries were discernible. For instance, both countries held different positions when Pakistan raised objections regarding the technical design features of the Kishanganga (330 megawatts) and Ratle (850 megawatts) hydroelectric power plants located on the tributaries of the Jhelum and the Chenab, respectively, designated as “Western Rivers”. However, under Articles III



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

and VII of the treaty, India is permitted to construct hydroelectric power facilities on these rivers (subject to constraints specified in Annexures to the Treaty).

Differences were also discernible when Pakistan approached the World Bank to facilitate the setting up of a court of arbitration to address the concerns related to these two projects referred to in Article IX Clause 5 of the treaty, and when India requested the appointment of a Neutral Expert referent to Clause 2.1 of Article IX on the settlement of differences and dispute of the treaty, respectively. Disagreements continued on the issue with many meetings brokered by the World Bank to resolve their disagreements. But it was without any success.

Eventually, on March 31, 2022, the World Bank, in view of the differences, decided to resume two separate processes by appointing a neutral expert and a chairman for the court of arbitration. However, the two parties have not been able to find an acceptable solution. The appointment of a neutral expert will find precedence to address the differences since under Article IX Clause 6 of the treaty provisions, Arbitration ‘shall not apply to any difference while it is

being dealt with by a Neutral Expert’. Therefore, the two separate processes are more likely to generate technical and legal repercussions.

Similarly, Pakistan, invoking Article VII Clause 2 on future cooperation, raised objections on the construction and technical designs of the Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai hydropower plants located on Marusudar river, a tributary of the Chenab, in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir. The 117th and the 118th meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission held this year deliberated this issue. Here, India has assured Pakistan that all the concerned projects are treaty compliant.

Similarly, India has raised concerns on issues such as Pakistan's blockade of the Fazilka drain, which resulted in water contamination in the border areas, referent to Article II Clause 3 and Article IV Clause 4 and 6 of the treaty. During the 117th bilateral meeting in March, Pakistan assured India of all possible actions to ensure the free flow of the Fazilka drain into the Sutlej.

Notwithstanding the differences, both countries have so far endeavoured to amicably address all such issues with both sides assuring to implement the treaty in letter and spirit.

Lessons from the treaty

Although there are many outstanding issues, the treaty is important and many lessons can be drawn. The treaty is an illustration of a long-standing engagement between the conflicting nations that has stood the vagaries of time.

It has withstood tensions, including conflict, providing a framework for cooperation. The treaty, therefore, is considered one of the oldest and the most effective examples of water management cooperation in the region and the world. The 118th bilateral meeting corroborates its effectiveness.

With the exception of differences on a few pending issues, both countries have avoided any actions resulting in the aggravation of the conflict or acted in a manner causing conflict to resurface. The recent bilateral meeting points to mutual respect, communication and a sharing of information, despite differences.

Potential for cooperation

The treaty can serve as an edifice to address the challenges of climate change. Recognising common interests and mutual benefits, India and Pakistan can undertake joint research on the rivers to study the impact of climate change for ‘future cooperation’ (underlined in Article VII).

The Indus Waters Treaty also offers great potential for cooperation and development in the sub-continent which can go a long way in ensuring peace and stability. Given that both India and Pakistan have been committed to manage the rivers in a responsible manner, the Treaty can be a reference point to resolve other water-related issues in the region through regular dialogue and interaction.

Mukesh Kumar Srivastava is Senior Consultant, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi. The views expressed are personal

Rajasthan reels under relentless heatwave

The early onset of the heatwave in the desert State this March — the hottest in 122 years since the India Meteorological Department started maintaining records — has threatened wildlife, taken a toll on the quality of crops, caused the water level in dams to plummet and affected rural employment, reports **Mohammed Iqbal**

Amid an unprecedented heatwave that has swept large swathes of Rajasthan since early March, bishnoi farmers in the State's Sriganaganagar and Hanumangarh districts have made an innovative provision to quench the thirst of deer, blackbucks and other wild ungulates. The farmers have dug up troughs and constructed concrete ponds, many of them in their own fields, to provide respite to a population of 10,000 deer and blackbucks.

The soaring mercury levels owing to the early onset of the heatwave in the desert State have threatened wildlife, taken a toll on the quality of crops, caused the water level in dams to plummet and affected rural employment.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), this March was the warmest in the country in 122 years since it began maintaining records. In mid-May, the temperature exceeded 45 degrees Celsius in all 33 districts of Rajasthan and the southwest monsoon is expected to be delayed owing to lesser intensity in its northward advancement, the IMD says. The monsoon is expected to enter the State after June 25. Till then, it is likely to reel under the heatwave.

According to a preliminary observation of this year's summer by the Central University of Rajasthan (CUoR), the heatwave's first spell lasted from March 11 to 20. In 2021, the heatwave began on March 28, with the maximum temperature at 40.27 degrees Celsius. In 2020, it started on April 5, with the maximum temperature at 36.39 degrees Celsius.

This year, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh experienced the heatwave for the highest number of days in the country, the study says. The absence of rain during this period aggravated the heatwave and even scanty rainfall could have brought the temperature down, it says.

"Our study of satellite data has revealed that conditions ideal for the heatwave will continue till the arrival of the monsoon. The impact of extreme temperature on environmental variables is serious this year," says Laxmi Kant Sharma, associate professor at CUoR's Department of Environmental Science. He says factors such as depletion of water for irrigation, evaporation of surface water and evapotranspiration from the green cover have exerted stress on sustainable water resources.

According to the IMD, an area is in the grip of a heatwave when there is a departure of 4.5 to 6.4 degrees Celsius from the normal temperature. When the maximum temperature is equal to or above 45 degrees Celsius, it is a heatwave, and if it is 47 degrees Celsius or above, it is a severe heatwave.

A heatwave, which can occur with or without high humidity, lasts more than two days and has the potential to cover a huge area, exposing a large number of people to hazardous heat, the IMD says.

Protecting wildlife

Farmers say their strategy of filling troughs and ponds with water in a 60 sq km area has helped save the lives of antelopes. Several antelopes drowned in the past while trying to drink water at the two major canals in the region — the Indira Gandhi Canal and the Bhakra Canal — which irrigate fields in arid areas. The concrete ponds for animals are situated in villages such as Hardyalpura and Lakhasar Rohi in Hanumangarh.

The initiative is led by Anil Bishnoi, a farmer and recipient of the State's Amrita Devi Environmental Award in 2009. He says farmers in the region were requested to fill up troughs using water from tube wells. They are also replenished with water from the canals or the village water supply scheme, he says.

Apart from farmers and wildlife enthusiasts, Border Security Force personnel posted in western Rajasthan have contributed towards saving the lives of animals and birds amid the blistering heatwave. They regularly direct water tankers bound for border outposts to fill up tanks and ponds in and around villages facing water scarcity.

Forest officials say in dry deciduous forests in the State, the leaves shed during the summer have become nutrient feed for herbivores such as spotted deer and antelopes. The animals come to waterholes a few times during the day to quench their thirst, while most birds are observed drinking water several times and some taking bath in puddles to beat the heat. Despite the intense heatwave, waterholes in wildlife reserves and national parks in the State have reported some depth of water. Officials say mortality rates among both carnivores and herbivores are not alarming during the peak of the heatwave as they find spots to hide themselves under groves, bamboo clumps and canopies of dense trees. These green niches containing moisture are numerous inside forests.

A tigress named Riddhi was recently observed vomiting near Jogi Mahal inside the Ranthambore National Park. Forest officials treated her and offered her a bait to regain strength. Harsh Vardhan, secretary, Tourism & Wildlife Society of India, says while the heat-



Feeling the heat: (Top) Farmers filling a concrete pond with water for wild animals to quench their thirst near a field at Lakhasar Rohi village in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh district; and a flock of sheep wandering in search of water on a sweltering afternoon in May in Churu district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT & V.V. KRISHNAN

wave has caused health problems in wild animals, flying squirrels and bats have the maximum mortality at peak summer. They are found in large numbers in south Rajasthan's forests and the regions around Jhadowl, Kotda, Dunganpur, Banswara, Kota and Baran, he says.

"They hang upside down from branches of large canopy trees like banyan and tamarind and fly to the nearest water source to quench their thirst, where they die because of weakness. Honeybees meet a similar fate during summer," says Mr. Vardhan.

The forest authorities have made arrangements for water supply inside Ranthambore and Sariska national parks through tube wells powered by solar panels. The troughs situated nearby are filled up to invite the attention of all wild species. Each tube well supplies water to a minimum of three waterholes located at a distance of four to six km. While plastic pipes have been placed underground, iron pipes have been used where the surface is rocky.

Crop productivity hit

According to Prof. Sharma, the heatwave has also had an adverse effect on plant productivity in the State. The temperature extremes have affected pollination, one of the most sensitive stages in the life cycle of a plant. However, there was no effect on leaf area or vegetative biomass in comparison to normal temperatures, he says.

The temperature effects are intensified by deficit in water and a reduction in the soil-water interaction or water holding capacity, says Prof. Sharma. Grain yield in the arid environment crop type has reduced by 80% to 90% from a normal temperature regime.

Farmers say the heat stress has affected the quality of wheat produced as a rabi crop, leaving an impact on its sale as well. The wheat grains harvested during the early onset of the heatwave have shrivelled. They have become thinner than their standard size and the impact is visible in 40% of the wheat produced. This has affected about 3.5 lakh farmers growing wheat in the State. Dashi Nath Kumar, general secretary of the Hadoti Kisan Union, says the ban on wheat export had also led to reduction in wheat prices from ₹2,200-₹2,300 per

quintal to ₹2,050 per quintal. "We have urged both the Central and State governments to procure all types of wheat for a bonus amount of ₹500 per quintal. So many families are dependent on this crop. The clause on standard size of grain should also be removed," he says.

While the Food Corporation of India had procured a record 23.40 lakh metric tonnes of wheat in the State during the rabi marketing year 2021-22, the production is projected to decrease this year amid reports that a huge portion of the crop may become unfit for human consumption. Crops such as mustard, barley and chickpea have also been affected by the extremely high temperature in several districts.

Dams at risk of running dry

As a result of the heatwave, most dams in the State have low storage of water. They need good rainfall in their catchment areas this year to replenish their reservoirs to provide water for drinking and irrigation. Apart from the Kota barrage dam, which is almost 90% filled, all other dams have low levels of water, which will only last till mid-July unless there are heavy and widespread rains.

The Baisalpur dam in Tonk district — catering to the drinking water needs of Tonk, Jaipur and Ajmer — has 298.13 million cubic metres (Mcum) of water,

which is 27% of its total capacity. As many as 449 of the 727 dams in the State are dry. Against the total capacity of 12,626.32 Mcum, dams across the State at present have water storage of 36.62% or 4,623.31 Mcum, according to the figures released by the State Water Resources Department.

The majority of the dams were filled up during the monsoon last year and the gates of several of them, mainly in the Hadoti region, had to be opened to release water. This year, the situation is serious mainly in Jodhpur division, where 123 dams have reached only 1.06% of their total storage capacity. Evaporation during the early heatwave and usage of water for irrigation have led to depletion of the water level.

Hansraj Godara, sarpanch of Lilalal village in Barmer district's Baytu tehsil, says the heatwave, accompanied by the closure of the Indira Gandhi Canal for two months for relining work, has created enormous difficulty for people in the region. "The canal is our lifeline as it quenches the thirst of western Rajasthan. Water supply from the canal restarted only recently after the relining work was finished," he says.

In Jodhpur, the canal blockade was extended because of damage to the Sirhind feeder in Punjab. The local Hathli Canal that carries water to Kaylana lake

and Takhtsagar lake, the natural reservoirs on the outskirts of the city, has also dried up. Residents of the city have been supplied with the limited water present in these reservoirs.

Jodhpur District Collector Himanshu Gupta has constituted an emergency response team for water supply management in the city and deployed the police force round the clock at filter plants in Kaylana, Chaupansi, Takhtsagar and Jhalamanda to prevent theft and misuse of water. Water is being supplied in the city only once in three days. The administration has also decided to impose a fine on those wasting water.

Water scarcity has hit some parts of the State so badly that a special train carrying 40 lakh litres of water has been started for Pali district. The train has been making an average of three trips from Bhagat Ki Kothi suburban railway station in Jodhpur to Pali every day since mid-April. It has so far supplied 20 crore litres of water to the city. The North Western Railway has announced that the service will continue till the water crisis in the region is over.

The State government's Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has paid ₹3.24 lakh to the Railways for each trip. The water is emptied from the wagons into the tanks at Pali railway station and sent to the pumping stations of the PHED for supply to the city. The first water train for Pali, covering a distance of 70 km from Jodhpur, was started in 2005 when the main water source, Jawal dam, had dried up. The train was run thrice in the subsequent years.

On June 5, Pali Municipal Council chairperson Rekha Bhati and her husband completed a 300-km march on foot from Pali to Jaipur with the demand for laying a water pipeline between Rohat town and Pali. Ms. Bhati says a 28-km pipeline from Rohat would connect Pali to Jodhpur's Kuri pumping station. "It would permanently resolve water scarcity in the city and obviate the need to run the special train," she says.

Early migration of cattle herders Hirdi Singh Tamlor, sarpanch of Barmer's Tamlor village, says the early arrival of the heatwave has affected the livelihood and livestock of people in western Rajasthan's desert districts. "There is

no grass available for grazing of animals in the traditional landscapes of Oran and Gochar, with the temperature hovering around 48 degrees Celsius."

Mr. Tamlor says the heatwave has also resulted in the early migration of cattle herders from the desert area to the fertile Hadoti region in south-eastern Rajasthan and neighbouring Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Animal rearers, who raise sheep, goats, cows and camels, migrate to areas with green cover every year during the monsoon, but the early onset of the heatwave has forced them to leave to protect their livestock.

Throwing light on the impact of the heatwave on working class people and farmers, Prof. Sharma says the combined effect of the metabolic heat produced internally from heavy physical activity and the external heat from the surrounding environment contributes to high risk of heat stress. "Workers engaged in strenuous work outdoors are exposed to solar radiation, while those in indoor settings face the heat generated from work processes or equipment."

Prof. Sharma says recent research has warned that climate change will intensify the duration and magnitude of occupational heat stress. The impact of rising heat in the workplace is likely to affect the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Heat-related illnesses will have a greater occurrence among agricultural workers, according to studies.

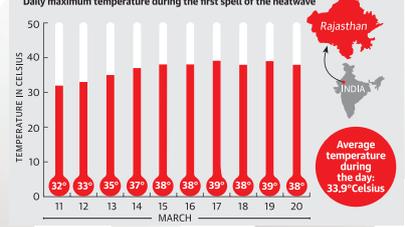
Experts say the relentless heatwave has also affected engine efficiency and fuel consumption of vehicles. CNG-powered vehicles and electric vehicles face issues with high temperature as battery efficiency and life reduce due to overheating, they say.

More heatwaves in the offing Amid widespread and intensifying climate change, the trend of heatwaves starting early in the year is here to stay. In a recent landmark report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has projected more intense heatwaves of longer duration and occurring at a higher frequency in the Indian subcontinent. Rajasthan needs to be prepared to face such fierce heatwaves and take adequate steps to protect its human inhabitants as well as its flora and fauna.

Too hot to handle

According to the India Meteorological Department, this March was the hottest in 122 years not only in Rajasthan but also in the country

Daily maximum temperature during the first spell of the heatwave



CAA will not help us: Bangladesh leader

He says main aim of Hindu community is to have a Minority Affairs Ministry

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
DHAKA

A leading member of the Hindu community of Bangladesh has said that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of India will not help them deal with the challenges ahead.

Interacting with a visiting team of Indian journalists on Wednesday, Monindra Kumar Nath, president, Mahanagar Sarbojoneen Puja Committee, said that the community's real aim is to have a separate Minority Affairs Ministry and a special permanent commission for the minority religious communities.

"We do not welcome this special law from India. Such laws are not helpful. We do have certain problems like



A file photo of activists during a protest in Dhaka.

▪ REUTERS

many others but we are from Bangladesh and we will remain here. No one wants to leave his or her motherland and take refuge in a neighbouring country. We will deal with whatever challenges we have by mobilising our

community in a coordinated manner within our country," said Mr. Nath, who is also the joint general secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council.

The Sheikh Hasina government faced a major challenge last year when a communal disturbance broke out at Brahmanbaria and Comilla in the eastern part of the country and spread to Chittagong.

The phase witnessed mob attacks on Durga Puja pandals. But Mr. Nath said that the number of Durga puja celebrations in the country had in fact nearly doubled during the last 12 years, from 15,000 to 30,000. The Mahanagar Sarbojoneen Puja Committee is the central religious body of the Hindu

community in Bangladesh as it grants permission to community members to hold Durga Puja celebrations across the country.

Mr. Deb acknowledged that the government had been proactive in dealing with majoritarian tendencies, though some sporadic incidents of intimidation of the minority Hindu community is reported from time to time. He said that over the years, representation of the community has also increased in Bangladesh.

The government has a Ministry of Religious Affairs. Mr. Nath argued that the issue of a separate ministry will be part of the agenda of minority communities as the country gets into election mode for next year.

ECB gears up to raise rates to fight inflation

It plans to lift rates by 25 bps on July 21

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
AMSTERDAM

The European Central Bank on Thursday ended its bond-buying stimulus and unveiled plans for a series of interest rate increases from July, the first in more than a decade, to combat soaring inflation.

ECB governors agreed as a first step to halt their multi-billion-euro bond-buying stimulus as of July 1.

The bank then plans “to raise the key ECB interest rates by 25 basis points” at its next meeting on July 21, the ECB said. It will raise rates again in September, with the size dependent on the economic outlook.

ECB president Christine Lagarde said the bank was embarking on “a journey”



that would include “a series of moves over the course of the next months”.

The last time the ECB raised rates was in 2011.

With consumer prices soaring, “the ECB officially ends its long era of unconventional monetary policy,” said ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski.

Inflation in the 19-nation euro area rose to a record 8.1% in May.

U.S. attempting to add fuel to the fire: China

Chinese Foreign Ministry calls visiting U.S. General's comment on border activity a 'despicable act'

DINAKAR PERI
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

A day after a visiting U.S. General termed the Chinese activity level in Eastern Ladakh as “eye-opening” and infrastructure being created in their Western Theatre Command as “alarming, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) reacted sharply on Thursday saying U.S. officials were trying to add “fuel to the fire” and “pointing fingers”, and termed it a “despicable act”.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) did not respond directly to the comments by Commander of

U.S. Army Pacific General Charles A. Flynn, but reiterated that the Government of India “carefully monitors” developments along the border areas. Noting that the two sides have agreed to hold another round of Corps Commander talks, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said it is their “expectation” that in these talks, the Chinese side will work with the Indian side to reach a “mutually acceptable solution for remaining issues.”

“This border issue is between China and India, the two sides have the will and capability to properly resolve the issue through talks

and some U.S. officials are trying to add fuel to the fire and pointing fingers,” Chinese MoFA Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in response to a question at the daily briefing in Beijing. “This is a despicable act. We hope they will do more to contribute to regional peace and stability.”

Mr. Zhao further stated that now the situation on the India-China border is stabilising “on the whole” and the frontline forces from both countries have “realised disengagement in most areas along the western section.”

Expressing alarm at the Chinese activity, Gen. Charles A. Flynn, in an interac-

tion with journalists on Wednesday, questioned their “intentions” while also expressing concern at their “behaviour”.

Govt. taking all measures

The government is committed to, and takes all adequate and appropriate measures for, safeguarding territorial integrity and sovereignty as the developments in the recent years clearly demonstrate, Mr. Bagchi said responding to questions at the weekly press conference.

Stating that the two sides have agreed to hold another round of Senior Commanders meeting during the

Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) talks last week, Mr. Bagchi said, “It is our expectation that in these talks the Chinese side will work with the Indian side to reach a mutually acceptable solution for remaining issues given the fact that both sides also agree that the prolongation of the existing situation is not in the interest of either side.”

On the situation in Ladakh, Mr. Bagchi said India has maintained continuous communication with the Chinese side through diplomatic and military channels.

Messy battle

The tug of war between the L-G and the CM is a barrier to Delhi's development ambitions

The turf battle between the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) appointed by the Centre and the elected government of Delhi has a long and noisy history. The recently appointed L-G, Vinai Kumar Saxena, has, through his disruptive enthusiasm to meddle in the day-to-day governance in Delhi, set the cat among the pigeons. Unlike his predecessors, Najeeb Jung and Anil Baijal, who too were at loggerheads with the elected government of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Mr. Saxena is a politician close to the BJP top brass. AAP has accused the L-G of undermining “constitutional sanctity” by having called a meeting of Delhi Jal Board officials on May 30 and issuing directions bypassing the Council of Ministers and the Chief Minister. The constitutional design of governance in Delhi itself is a consuming dispute that is being litigated in the Supreme Court. The Constitution gives the Centre control over three subjects – land, public order, and police. However, over the years, the Narendra Modi government has expanded the L-G's powers, including through an amendment to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act that the AAP government challenged in court last year. Through these amendments, the Centre reorganised the powers and responsibilities of the Delhi Legislative Assembly and the L-G, in favour of the latter. In the new law, “government” referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly will imply Lieutenant Governor (L-G), curtailing the powers of the elected government.

AAP has emerged as a thorn in the side of the BJP that is the dominant pole of the country's politics, barely challenged in many regions. The tussle between the Delhi government and the L-G has to be understood from this perspective. The Centre has been persistent in its attempts to rein in AAP that has been trying to propagate its governance model in the Capital as a propellant of its national ambitions. While the BJP appears to be willing to go to any length to clip the wings of AAP, the latter's loud protests are less on questions of principle than its own political calculations. AAP had cheered the Centre's unilateral move that robbed Jammu and Kashmir of its statehood and special status in 2019. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's grievances against the L-G are not unfounded, but he himself contributes to the stand-off as his politics compels him to be in constant combat with the BJP. Despite pronouncements by the L-G and the CM to work in tandem, their relationship has nosedived to new lows. Their long-drawn tug of war is a needless barrier to the capital city's development ambitions. Until the Court brings clarity on all issues of division of powers between the L-G and the CM, both would be well advised to work with mutual respect and accommodation.

Is tying the knot a way to untangle even grievous cases?

Two recent Supreme Court decisions have placed domestic stability above the punishment due to a convicted man

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Two recent decisions of the Supreme Court raise the question whether a convicted man can spare himself years of jail time by entering into what seems to be a rather opportune marriage with his victim or to a member of the victim's family.

In June, the court used its extraordinary power under Article 142 to release a man convicted of attempt to murder because he married his victim's sister while the case was still pending in the Madras High Court. The top court noted that all the people involved were living in the same locality. The par-

ties involved had approached the court to set aside the conviction "in order to bring peace and in order to live cordially". The accused had spent just 18 months in jail.

"In the peculiar facts and circumstances of this case, particularly when there is a marriage within the families of the injured and the accused, we consider it a fit case wherein this court could exercise its power under Article 142. We, therefore, permit the parties to compound the offence," the court observed.

The second case, in May, also from Tamil Nadu, concerned a man who was con-



victed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for raping his minor niece. He had later married her.

Taking note that the custom of avunculate marriage existed in Tamil Nadu, the court set aside his conviction, reasoning that it did not

want to "disturb" their "marriage" and "happy family life". The court said its decision was based, again, on the "peculiar facts and circumstances of the case" and should not be used as precedent.

In both cases, the top court seems to have placed the idea of domestic stability above the punishment due to a convicted man.

The National Commission for Women has reportedly marked a 30% rise in crime against women in 2021 compared with the 2020 figure, with more than half of them against their life and dignity. The NCW had received nearly 31,000 complaints of

crimes committed against women in 2021.

Last year, the SC faced a flurry of outrage when Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde asking the lawyer of a rape accused to find out whether his client would be willing to marry the victim or risk the prospect of going to jail. The lawyer had later come back to say that his client had declined as he was already married.

A few days later, Justice Bobde (now retired) clarified that he was misquoted in the media.

On March 18, 2021, a verdict, authored by Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, had set aside

a Madhya Pradesh High Court order granting bail to a suspected molester provided he visited his victim at her home and "allowed" her to tie a *rakhi* on him. In a scathing verdict, Justice Bhat had said judgments and orders continue to reflect "entrenched paternalistic and misogynistic attitudes" even after 70 years as a Republic.

"A woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and with a judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view," Justice Bhat had quoted Henrik Ibsen.

Presidential polls scheduled for July 18

A list of the members of the electoral college would be uploaded on the EC's site and updated when the results of the ongoing elections to 55 Rajya Sabha seats and Assembly byelections are announced, he said. Political parties cannot issue a whip to their members, the CEC said. Mr. Kumar said electors in preventive detention would be allowed to vote and those in jail would

have to seek parole in order to cast their ballots.

In 2017, Mr. Kovind won with 7,02,044 votes over former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar who got 3,67,314 votes out of the total of 10,69,358.

While the total number of electors was 4,896 in 2017, each MP had 709 votes and MLAs had a total votes of 5,49,495 based on the 1971 Census.

Presidential polls scheduled for July 18

Notification on June 15; counting of votes on July 21

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday announced that the Presidential election would be held on July 18 and counting of votes, if required, would be held on July 21. President Ram Nath Kovind's term ends on July 24.

Announcing the schedule, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the notification would be issued on June 15 and the last date for nominations would be June 29. The date for scrutiny of candidature would be June 30 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature would be July 2.



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, right, during a news conference in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The electoral college for the poll will comprise 4,809 members – 233 Rajya Sabha and 543 Lok Sabha members and 4,033 MLAs of the Assemblies of the States and the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry. The total

value of votes will be 10,86,431 (5,43,200 for MPs or 700 votes each and 5,43,231 for MLAs based on the 1971 Census population figures).

This Presidential election will be the first to be held

since the State of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh in 2019. The MLAs of J&K are no longer part of the electoral college. During the previous Presidential poll in 2017, the 87

MLAs of the State of J&K had 72 votes each, taking the total value of their votes to 6,264 out of the total of 10,98,903 votes.

Mr. Kumar said each candidate would require 50 members of the electoral college to propose their name and another 50 to second it. The polling would be carried out in the Parliament House for MPs and at the respective State Assemblies for MLAs, with the Rajya Sabha Secretary General declared as the Returning Officer.

The electors would cast their ballots using the pen provided by the EC as has been the norm, he said. Protocols regarding COVID-19 safety would be followed, he added.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 11

'IISc, Bengaluru top Indian varsity'

It ranks 155 in QS World University Rankings; 41 Indian institutions on the list

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc) is the new national leader in the QS World University Rankings, 2023 released on Thursday, which also shows that all Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) improved their standing.

The latest edition of QS World University Rankings features 41 Indian universities, of which 12 improved their positions, 12 remained stable, 10 declined and seven are new entries.

The IISc ranks 155th globally, and is the global leader in the citations per faculty (CpF) indicator, which QS uses to evaluate the impact of the research produced by universities. It is the fastest rising South Asian university among the top-200 universi-



The IISc is the fastest rising South Asian university. ■ FILE PHOTO

ties in the QS rankings, having climbed 31 places year on year.

The IIT Bombay, which was the top Indian university in QS World University Rankings of the previous edition, is the second best Indian institution this time and climbed five places globally to reach the 172 rank.

The third best Indian un-

iversity is the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IITD), followed by IIT Madras and IIT Kanpur.

O.P. Jindal Global University is the top-ranked private institute in India, and moved up from the 701-750 ranking band to 651-700, followed by the Manipal Academy of Higher Education and Amity University.

The IISc is the world's top research university, achieving a perfect score of 100/100 for CpF.

The IIT in Guwahati and Roorkee and the University of Madras are also among global top-50 research institutions. However, Indian universities struggle with teaching capacity and internationalisation. Thirty of India's 41 ranked universities have suffered declines in the faculty-student ratio indicator with only four recording improvements.

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham is the best-performing local institution for the proportion of international faculty ranking 411 globally and the Amity University is the national leader for the proportion of international students, ranking 542 globally.

'CAD likely hit a 3-year high of \$43.8 bn'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

India's current account deficit is likely to have hit a three-year high of 1.8% of GDP, or \$43.8 billion, in FY22 compared with a surplus of 0.9%, or \$23.9 billion, in FY21, India Ratings said in a report on Thursday.

According to an assessment by the agency, the current account deficit (CAD) had moderated to \$17.3 billion, or 1.96% of GDP, in the fourth quarter of FY22 as against ₹8.2 billion, or 1.03%, a year earlier, and significantly lower than the \$23.02 billion, or 2.74%, seen in Q3, which was a 13-quarter high. Goods exports rose 42.4% in FY22 after contracting 7.5% in pandemic-hit FY21.

Biotech sector grew 8 fold: Modi

Major focus areas are health, agri: PM

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

India's bio-economy has grown eight-fold in the past eight years and the country was close to being among the top biotechnology countries in the world, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the inauguration of the Biotech Startup Expo, 2022 here on Thursday.

"We have grown from \$10 billion to \$80 billion. India is not too far from reaching the league of top-10 countries in biotech's global ecosystem," he said. The Prime Minister underlined the contribution of the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council in the development of the sector.

Mr. Modi said that trust in the skill and innovation of India's information technology professionals in the world was at "new heights" and this upbeat mood was now evident in the biotech sector as well as among the biotechnology professionals of India."



Narendra Modi

According to the PM, there were five big reasons why India is being considered a land of opportunities in the field of biotech. First, its diverse population and diverse climatic zones; second, the country's talented human capital; third, ease of doing business in India; fourth, the rising demand for bio-products in India; and fifth, India's own biotech sector and its track record of success. The major focus areas for the sector are health, agriculture, energy, natural farming and bio-fortified seeds.

‘Rated firms have buffers to bear 10-15% rupee depreciation’

Protections include natural hedges of revenue, costs linked to the dollar: Moody’s

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Moody’s Investors Service on Thursday said most rated firms in India have buffers to withstand a further 10-15% depreciation of the rupee.

The rupee weakened by 6 paise to close at 77.74 against the U.S. dollar on Thursday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices and persistent foreign capital outflows.

In a statement, Moody’s said the rupee has depreciated about 4.5% in 2022.

Higher energy prices and interest rates in developed economies have led to capital outflows and rising commodity prices, pressuring the rupee.



Global hit: Higher interest rates to tame prices in developed countries have led to capital outflows, hurting the rupee. ■ AP

The rupee’s depreciation is credit negative for companies that generate revenue in rupees but rely heavily on dollar debt to fund operations, as well as for those with significant dollar-based

costs, such as raw materials and capital spending. However, the negative credit implications for rated companies will be limited.

“Most rated companies have protections to limit the

effect of currency fluctuations. These include natural hedges in the form of revenue and costs denominated in or linked to the dollar, some dollar revenue and financial hedges, or a combination of these factors, which help limit the adverse effects on cash flow and leverage, even under a more severe depreciation scenario,” Moody’s said.

Exporters could benefit as their services or products become cheaper and therefore more competitive.

However, in the current environment, the benefit would be likely limited amid weak global demand and rising inflation, it added.

Is the ban on wheat exports good policy?

PARLEY

It is ad hoc, hurts farmers' incomes, and may not impact inflation much

Over the last month, the government has banned the export of wheat and imposed quantitative restrictions on outbound sugar shipments. The wheat export ban came within days of a push to enhance India's wheat supplies to the rest of the world after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This is a time of persistently high inflation, spurred by rising food and fuel prices, and there are concerns about a lower yield this year due to intensive heat waves. The government has argued that farmers have not lost out due to the ban as most had already sold their produce this season. In a discussion moderated by Vikas Dhoot, S. Mahendra Dev and Himanshu consider the efficacy of these curbs. Edited excerpts:

What do the export curbs mean for reining in inflation and addressing India's food security concerns?

Himanshu: I don't think the export ban is going to help much with inflation as the procurement season for the wheat crop is more or less over. I don't think it is going to keep the prices down or help the government to procure and prepare better for food security.

My objection to the ban has not been on the policy of export curbs per se – almost 30 countries have done the same, and countries should have a sovereign right to decide what is the right time to curb exports. My problem is with a kind of ad-hocism or muddled policy-making. And this is not the first time, which makes it more worrying. This has been going on for the last two decades – there is no planning on how to manage the trade policy for agriculture products or even other products. Look at it: on May 12, there was an official press release about sending delegations to nine countries to explore wheat export opportunities. And then on May 13, there was an export ban. That's not the right way of looking at it. Through April, officials went to the U.S., talked to President Joe Biden, and the Finance and Commerce Ministers were saying, 'If not for the WTO [World Trade Organization], we will be feeding the entire world'. And then suddenly within a

month, the government says, 'No, no, we don't have enough for exports.' This gives a wrong signal to domestic farmers as well as traders. It is certainly not good for food security because whatever damage was supposed to happen has already happened. The government has not been able to procure whatever is required for managing its food security apparatus.

Did circumstances change significantly between April and May with the wheat crop estimates being downgraded? Or even between May 12 and May 13, when India went from being an aspiring wheat exporter to the world to banning exports completely?

S. Mahendra Dev: Even before the Ukraine-Russia war, global food prices were increasing because of excess liquidity across the world. But the war gave India an opportunity to export more wheat. The global export market is around 200 million tonnes, of which 55 million tonnes are generally from Ukraine and Russia. India exported 7 million tonnes in 2021-22, and everybody thought we had a lot of opportunity this year. Open market prices were higher at ₹2,400 a quintal compared to the MSP [Minimum Support Price] of around ₹2,100. So, farmers were getting higher prices after a long time. The export ban has two effects. It impacts farmers' incomes as well as the long-term credibility of the export policy. One reason given for the ban was the production estimates. In 2006 too, production was overestimated and India had to import as procurement was low. It's the same now: many people thought production was over-estimated at 111 million tonnes; now we may have 99-100 million tonnes. The second reason was procurement. Last year, 44 million tonnes were procured; now we are expecting around 19 million tonnes. The third reason was the retail inflation, which was inching close to 8% in April, with food products even higher.

The government may have acted for these reasons, but it has hurt farmers' incomes and the impact on inflation may not be very high be-



cause global food prices are still high. Instead of an export ban, it could have opted for a minimum export price and given a bonus of ₹250 to ₹300 to spur more procurement for food security goals. On sugar, of global exports of around 64 million tonnes, India was exporting 8 million tonnes last year. Now, there is no shortage of sugar production. We are expecting 35 million tonnes. Even with exports, we could have had a closing stock of around 6 million tonnes. So, there was no need – the government says it is because of global shortage and higher prices in India. It thinks that during the festival season, sugar prices should not go up and has restricted exports to 10 million tonnes.

Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal has said local wheat prices have fallen by about ₹5 a kg, so the export ban is indeed working. The G7 nations and other countries have urged India to rethink the ban, though government-to-government procurements will be considered.

Himanshu: Global credibility is not as important as India has not been a regular wheat exporter except for the last two-three years when it had excess stocks. The more serious issue is the credibility of government policy for our biggest stakeholders – the millions of farmers who need a stable and consistent policy. This has not been provided. As far as domestic price measures are concerned, things get a little tricky – because for the last few years, farmers have been suffering through low prices domestically, due to the slowdown in the economy and the pandemic. Finally, when they had the

The export ban impacts farmers' incomes as well as the long-term credibility of the export policy.

S. MAHENDRA DEV

chance to get slightly better incomes from the produce, the government imposed the export ban. So, the domestic outcomes of the export ban are worrying, because we had options like a bonus for procurement that could have helped farmers and food security concerns. Some kind of disincentives could have been built in rather than an outright ban on exports, which basically doesn't help the farmers or even the consumers that much, whatever the government claims.

We have to see this in the context of the overall agricultural policy, not just for exports, but also incentives and market interventions. What we need is a more cohesive, consistent, stable and predictable agricultural policy, rather than an ad-hoc, unjustified manner of pressing the panic button.

In 2016-17, India had a good pulses crop. But procurement was bungled then and farmers, who were left high and dry, reduced sowing for pulses from the next year. Could we see a similar impact on sowing preferences this time?

Himanshu: This is an important question. Let's look at oil seeds, another commodity which has seen a massive increase in prices. We have been importing roughly 60% of our seeds and must produce more. But as prices have gone up, the government reduced the import duty on palm oil, and while that is going to reduce market prices for consumers, it would be at the cost

of the farmer who will not enjoy the benefits of higher price. So, in a sense, we are penalising the farmer who could have actually shifted production towards oil seeds, but can't compete with cheaper imports. So, we have a policy that penalises farmers at the cost of the consumers, who always get the preference, whether it is pulses or oil seeds.

The 2016 episode with pulses is a good example – when farmers were able to get higher prices, the government dumped imports from Mozambique and other countries, which led to the collapse of prices. Since then, farmers have been hesitant to go into pulses production. The risks of a muddled policy can damage prospects across the spectrum. We have gone from self-sufficiency in edible oils at the beginning of the 1990s to complete dependency on imports – and trade policy had a large role in that.

S. Mahendra Dev: Since Independence, we have been favouring the consumers at the expense of the farmers. That has to change. The situation assessment survey of 2018-19 shows that farmers' incomes are low, with only ₹127 a day from cultivation. We have to think of the farmers' families because they also have expenses, such as health, education and agriculture inputs. For consumers, social protection programmes can act as a support rather than a reduction in farm prices.

Sowing preferences may not change that much, because rice and wheat get a lot of incentives and take up about 80% of the water of the entire agriculture sector. But this ad-hocism – one year we export, next year we ban it – has been happening with most commodities, from wheat to onions. Diversification is important not just for food security, but also nutrition security as many of the poor are not able to buy pulses or eggs and meat.

The government had talked of doubling farm incomes by 2022. How do these steps fit in with that goal?

S. Mahendra Dev: In 2013, farmers were getting ₹6,400 and in 2018-19, that was around ₹7,700 in real terms. That's a 21% increase in six years, or 3.5% per annum. You need 10% growth per year to double farm incomes. Non-farm income is also needed because cultivation alone is

not enough.

Himanshu: I think everybody knew when the announcement was made that this is impossible – when it had not happened in the past, it was unlikely to happen when the economy was in the middle of a slowdown. Also, farmer incomes are dependent on not just output prices but also input costs, which have been rising. So, you can have a weird situation where input prices grow faster than output prices, and farmers actually make losses rather than higher incomes. Even over the last six months of rising prices, I don't think farmers gained much. A large part of the benefits went to traders and speculators, who hoarded stocks to sell at high prices later.

The whole premise of the three farm reform laws, now abandoned, was to give farmers the freedom to sell where and when they want...

Himanshu: I think the last three months have been a good example of the futility of the farm laws. The Government says the farmers have sold wheat at a higher price because the government was able to pick up less than 20 million tonnes, less than half the target. So, farmers obviously had avenues if they wanted to sell it to the private players. They managed to sell it without any change in the market infrastructure and without the farm laws. The problem is only when the prices are low as that is when you need the government to step in, and that is the point of MSP. This is a good example of how a bogey was created around the farm laws, that these were the only barriers to farmers not getting high prices. But now the government itself is saying farmers have got high prices, nullifying the entire premise on which the laws were formulated. The problem was not about the farmers, it's the nature of agricultural markets and the vulnerability of farmers.

S. Mahendra Dev: We have been talking about farm reforms since 2003. My stand has been this: leave it to the States. In India, a large country, you cannot have one system for the entire country, which has so many variations in soil, climate, etc. So, each State can see what can be done rather than the Centre imposing farm laws.



S. Mahendra Dev is director and vice chancellor, *Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research*



Himanshu is associate professor at the *JNU's Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences*



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

EXPLAINER

The Indian patent regime and its clash with the U.S. norms

The U.S. Trade Representative highlighted IP challenges in India in its annual Special 301 report released last month

THE GIST

SRUTHI DARBHAMULLA

The story so far: The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said in a report released last month that India was one of the most challenging major economies as far as IP protection and enforcement is concerned. It has decided to retain India on its Priority Watch List along with six other countries – Argentina, Chile, China, Indonesia, Russia and Venezuela. Among the issues raised in the report are India's inconsistencies regarding patent protection, including waiting time for obtaining patents, burdensome reporting requirements, and doubts about data safety. India had undertaken an intellectual property review exercise last year, where a Parliamentary Standing Committee examined this subject.

The Indian patent regime

A patent is an exclusive set of rights granted for an invention, which may be a product or process that provides a new way of doing something or offers a new technical solution to a problem. Indian patents are governed by the Indian Patent Act of 1970.

India has gradually aligned itself with international regimes pertaining to intellectual property rights. It became a party to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement following its membership to the World Trade Organisation on January 1, 1995.

India is also a signatory to several IPR related conventions, including the Berne Convention, which governs copyright, the Budapest Treaty, the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), all of which govern various patent-related matters.

An interesting point is that the original Indian Patents Act did not grant patent protection to pharmaceutical products to ensure that medicines were available at a low price. Patent protection of pharmaceuticals were re-introduced after the 2005 amendment to comply with TRIPS. Last month, the U.S. released its yearly

Special 301 report, its annual review highlighting the state of intellectual property rights protection in different countries which are its trading partners around the world.

In its India section, the report highlighted a range of issues in domains ranging from copyright and piracy to trademark counterfeiting and trade secrets, saying that India "remained one of the world's most challenging major economies with respect to protection and enforcement of IP."

It said patent issues continued "to be of particular concern in India," highlighting the threat of patent revocations, lack of presumption of patent validity and narrow patentability criteria as issues which "impact companies across different sectors."

The USTR had also released a similar report in 2021, addressing much of the same concerns.

These, and general issues regarding IPR were extensively tackled by the Parliamentary Standing Committee which undertook a 'review of the intellectual property rights regime in India'. The Committee tabled its findings before the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha in July last year.

Article 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act

This offered an insight into the landscape of Indian intellectual property law and where it is reasonably in sync with American patent laws and where it diverges. One of the main points of contention between India and the U.S. has been Article 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act.

Section 3 deals with what does not qualify as an invention under the Act, and Section 3(d) in particular excludes "the mere discovery of a new form of a known substance which does not result in the enhancement of the known efficacy of that substance or the mere discovery of any new property or new use for a known process, machine or apparatus unless such known process results in a new product or employs at least one new reactant" from being eligible for protection under patent law.

This was addressed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee as well, which pointed out that the section "acts as a safeguard against frivolous inventions in accordance with the flexibility provided in the TRIPS agreement."

Section 3(d), as mentioned above, prevents the mere discovery of any new property or new use for a known substance from being patented as an invention unless it enhances the efficacy of the substance repetitive. This prevents, what is known as "evergreening" of patents.

According to the Committee's report, Section 3(d) allows for "generic competition by patenting only novel and genuine inventions."

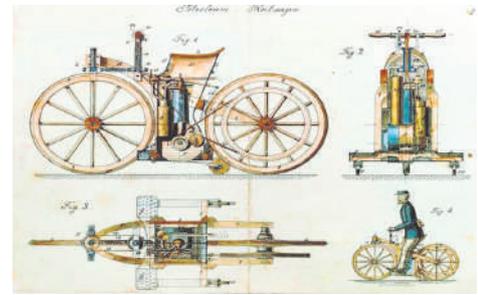
TRIPS and the Doha Declaration

The Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health was adopted on November 14, 2001, by the WTO member states. This declaration recognises the "gravity of public health problems affecting developing and least developed nations" and stresses the need for TRIPS to be part of the wider national and international action to address these problems.

It recognises that "intellectual property protection is important for the development of new medicines," and acknowledges concerns about its effects on prices. Saying that the TRIPS agreement "does not and should not prevent members from taking measures to protect public health," the declaration points out that the agreement "can and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members' right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all."

Compulsory licences can be invoked by a state in public interest, allowing companies apart from the patent owner to produce a patented product without consent.

It concluded that India must not compromise on the patentability criteria under Section 3(d) since as a sovereign country it has the "flexibility to stipulate limitations on grants of patents in



The figures in Reitwagen patent.

consistency with its prevailing socio-economic conditions." It said that this ensures the growth of generic drug makers and the public's access to affordable medicines.

It indicated that India should resolve its differences with the U.S. regarding the disqualification of incremental inventions through bilateral dialogue.

Positive steps

The report highlighted some positive steps taken by India in the recent past, such as the accession to the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Performances and Phonograms Treaty and WIPO Copyright Treaty, collectively known as the WIPO Internet Treaties, in 2018 and the Nice Agreement in 2019.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee too noted amendments pertaining to Form 27, under the Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2020. Some notable changes include allowing a single Form 27 to be filed for multiple related patents, filing of joint forms if there are more patentees and allowing authorised agents to submit forms.

India and the U.S. will continue to engage on IP matters, the report says, especially through the Trade Policy Forum's Intellectual Property Working Group.

Rhino reintroduction a hit in Assam reserve

Manas National Park rhinos need translocation support, reveals latest census

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The one-horned rhinos of western Assam's Manas National Park, bordering Bhutan, are expected to have high life expectancy and significant growth in population, the 14th Assam rhino estimation census has revealed.

But on the flip side, the 500-sq.-km park does not have "a wider representation of calves and sub-adults" to sustain the population structure unless it is supplemented through conservation translocations.

Manas, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a tiger reserve, had about 100 resident rhinos prior to 1990, but a prolonged ethno-political conflict thereafter took a heavy toll with extremist groups known to have traded the horns of the herbivores for weapons.

A rhino reintroduction programme under the Indian Rhino Vision 2020 was started in 2006. This entailed the translocation of rhinos from Kaziranga National Park and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary besides orphans hand-reared at the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation at Kaziranga. The current rhino population in the park

was estimated at 40 after the census on April 1 and 2.

A detailed census report by Vaibhav C. Mathur, the field director of Manas, said the park's rhinos have a male-female sex ratio of 1:1, arrived at without considering 10 calves and five sub-adults. But such a population may suffer losses if not supplemented through translocations, the report warned. "A suitable strategy to bring in more rhinos from other rhino-bearing areas is required so as to have a wider representation of calves and sub-adults over time," the census report said.

Speed limit

Meanwhile, the Kaziranga National Park authorities have restricted the speed of vehicles on the highway adjoining the park to 40 km per hour. This is an annual step taken to prevent vehicles from hitting animals that move out of the park during floods.

Officials said six sensor-based cameras have been installed at nine designated animal corridors of the park to measure the speed of vehicles and impose fines on those who violate the order.

The cameras are equipped with automatic number plate recognising system with radar for determining speed, a divisional forest officer said.

As per the orders of the National Green Tribunal, owners of vehicles that do not adhere to the speed limit will be penalised.

Demilitarise Aegean islands: Erdogan

Turkish President accuses Greece of violating treaties

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ANKARA

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday warned Greece to demilitarise islands in the Aegean Sea, saying he was “not joking” with the admonition.

Turkey says Greece has been building a military pre-

sence in violation of treaties that guarantee the unarmed status of the Aegean islands. It argues the islands were ceded to Greece on the condition they remained demilitarized.

“We invite Greece to stop arming the islands that have non-military status and to act in accordance with international agreements,” Erdogan said on the final day of military exercises taking place near Izmir, on Turkey’s Aegean coast. “I’m not

joking, I’m speaking seriously. This nation is determined.”

History of disputes

Greece and Turkey are NATO allies, but the neighboring countries have a history of disputes over a range of issues, including mineral exploration in the eastern Mediterranean and rival claims in the Aegean Sea.

“We warn Greece to stay away from dreams and actions that it will regret, and

to come to its senses,” the Turkish leader continued. “Turkey won’t give up on its rights in the Aegean, in the same way that it will not stand back from using its rights stemming from international agreement.”

Greece maintains Turkey has deliberately misinterpreted the treaties and says it has legal grounds to defend itself following hostile actions by Ankara, including a threat of war if Greece extended its territorial waters.

Thailand becomes first Asian country to legalise Marijuana

Move aimed at boosting tourism and agriculture sectors

REUTERS
BANGKOK

Thailand legalised the growing of marijuana and its consumption in food and drinks on Thursday, the first Asian country to do so, with the aim of boosting its agriculture and tourism sectors but smoking pot is still against the law.

Shoppers queued up at outlets selling cannabis-infused drinks, sweets and other items as advocates of the plant welcomed the reform in a country that has long had a reputation for strict anti-drug laws.

Among those at the front of the queue at one Bangkok shop was Rittipong Dachkul, 24, waiting since Wednesday evening to buy his first ever



Customers queue up to buy cannabis in Bangkok on Friday. ■REUTERS

legal marijuana. “I took a bus here after I got off work,” Mr. Rittipong said.

“We’re now able to find it easily, we don’t have to worry about the source, but I have no idea about the quality,” he said, referring to the strength of the products on offer.

Thailand, which has a tradition of using cannabis to relieve pain and fatigue, legalised medicinal marijuana in 2018.

Restriction in place

The government, banking on the plant as a cash crop, plans to give away a million plants to encourage farmers to take up its cultivation.

The possession and sale of cannabis extracts containing more than 0.2% of its psychoactive ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is not allowed, which will mean smokers of the drug known as “pot”, “weed” and a host of other names, will struggle to get “stoned”.

Those who break the law can still face jail and fines.

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.