



**VEDHIK**  
**IAS ACADEMY**  
*The New Learning Mantra*

# VEDHIK

## DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

08 - JULY - 2022



## **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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# Monsoon getting hotter than summer: study

'Average temperatures during the season are 0.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average summer figures'

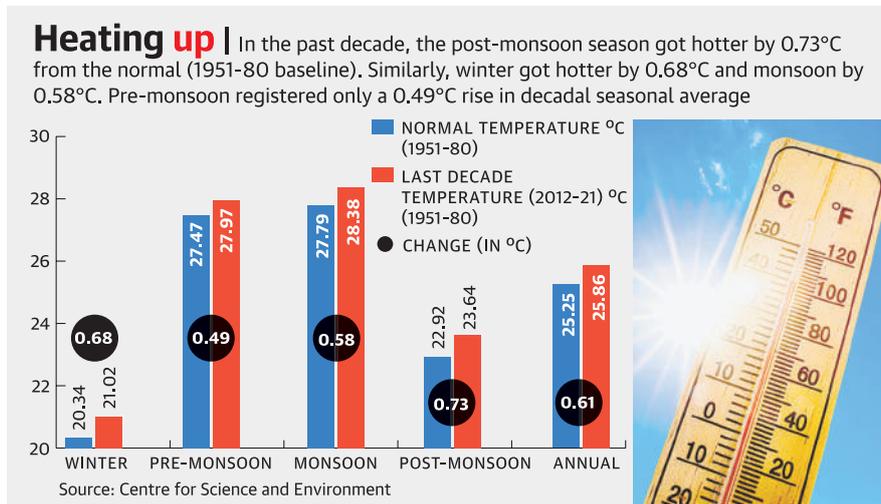
**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The monsoon has usually meant respite from the heat, but temperatures during these months – June to September – are seeing a rise, says an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), an environment group, made public on Thursday.

At an all-India level, average temperatures during the season are 0.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average summer temperatures (March to May) when compared from 1951 to 1980. In the past decade, 2012-2021, this anomaly has risen to 0.4 degrees Celsius.

India's average temperature has risen 0.62 degrees Celsius from 1901 to 2020, according to India Meteorological Department records.

However, in a breakdown of this rise, the CSE analysis



shows it has translated to summer temperatures rising slower than not only monsoon but even post-monsoon (October-December) and winter (January and February) temperatures.

The increase in these two seasons are 0.79 degrees and

0.58 degrees, respectively, whereas summer temperatures has risen only 0.49 degrees. This year, India saw record pre-monsoon temperatures in northern and western regions, in the absence of rain.

The average daily maxi-

mum temperature for March and April for Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand – was almost 4 degrees Celsius above normal (com-

pared to its baseline of 1981-2010). This is almost twice as much as the anomaly observed at an all-India level, and it holds true for even average daily minimum, daily mean and land surface temperatures, the CSE noted. Temperatures became closer to normal during May.

## Heatwave deaths

These numbers had a bearing on heatwave deaths. From 2015 to 2020, 2,137 people had reportedly died of heat stroke in the States in northwest but the southern peninsula region had reported 2,444 deaths due to excess environmental heat, with Andhra Pradesh alone accounting for over half the reported casualties.

Delhi reported only one death for the period. Most deaths have been reported among working age men (30-60 age group).

## EXPLAINER

# The proposal for an India-specific norm for assessing vehicular safety in collision

How does the new draft on the Bharat New Car Assessment Program compare with the Global NCAP? How has the automobile industry responded?

SAPTAPARNO GHOSH

**The story so far:** On June 24, Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari approved a Draft GSR (general statutory rules) Notification seeking comments on a proposal to introduce the Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP). It would accord vehicles a star rating based on their performance in crash tests. They are intended to increase the export-worthiness of vehicles and competition on safety parameters among manufacturers, as well as instil consumer confidence in their safety. "Bharat NCAP will prove to be a critical instrument in making our automobile industry Aatmanirbhar with the mission of making India the Number 1 automobile hub in the world," he tweeted.

**What is the purpose of an NCAP?** New Car Assessment Programs (NCAPs) provide globally reliable information about the crash safety of a vehicle based on certain common criteria and procedures. This then helps vehicles acquire a foothold in international markets. They are separate from country-specific motor standards in the sense that the latter restricts itself to assessing the vehicle's roadworthiness and not necessarily how it would ensure safety in a collision. However, a zero rating in an NCAP cannot prevent a car from being sold in any geography. Global NCAP is a standardised



platform establishing cooperation and coordination among NCAPs internationally whereas regional NCAPs take into account specific local conditions. A car may have attained a good rating elsewhere but it might not be the case in another geography because of potentially separate manufacturing origins and quality. The nature of the domestic markets also matter – consumers may prefer a car with reduced safety specifications for there is greater insistence on affordability.

### How would the vehicles be evaluated?

The voluntary Bharat NCAP would assign vehicles between one and five stars on parameters such as Adult Occupant Protection (AOP), Child Occupant Protection (COP) and Safety Assist Technologies (SAT). It would study frontal impact, side impact and the

possibility of a door opening after a crash. The potential impact is studied with the help of dummies, of pre-specified measurements, placed inside the vehicle. The car is crashed into an aluminium deformable barrier impersonating an opposing force of the same magnitude – a crash-like situation, with a 40% overlap.

Bharat NCAP would conduct its frontal offset crash testing at 64 kmph instead of the prevailing 56 kmph norm. Offset collisions are those where one side of a vehicle's front and not the full width hits the barrier. Even though the existing regulations adhere to United Nations Regulation 94 for collision testing, its absence in domestic testing norms, and inadequate side protection in vehicles (such as airbags), has been often cited as reasons for the poor performance of Indian vehicles at NCAPs.

After the test collision, to assess adult protection, the dummy would be checked for injuries on the head, neck, chest, knee, pelvis area, lower leg, foot and ankle. Whether the airbags protect the occupant's head that moves forward reflexively in the aftermath of a collision would be evaluated. There must not be any rib compression or injury to the knee joint. Additionally, full or partial ejection of an occupant because of a door opening is negatively marked.

For assessing child protection, the NCAP would evaluate the impact to a child restraint system (CRS) and airbag safety. CRS are portable seats designed to

protect children during vehicle collisions. Vehicles that can accommodate a broad variety of child seats available in the domestic market would be rewarded. The child must not be ejected from the CRS and his/her head must be contained within the shell of the CRS preventing any outside blow following a crash.

Higher ratings would be accorded to vehicles with a permanent warning label on frontal airbags. Sudden braking may propel a child in the front row towards the dashboard, against an airbag which is inflating at an immense speed and having huge volume, causing injury or death. Cars must have manual switches to disable airbags which should not be within the child's reach.

### What does it hold for the domestic automobile industry?

The proposed move follows Mr. Gadkari's focus on "zero tolerance for road accidents." In February this year, he had said efforts must be made to reduce road accidents by 50% by the year 2025.

With respect to Bharat NCAP, Hemal Thakkar, Director for Transport, Logistics and Mobility at analytics firm CRISIL, said that consumers will have to prepare for an increase in vehicle prices, but will also get safer vehicles. "There could be a dent to the price sensitive lower compact segment as muted income growth has already increased pressure on this segment which will get further accentuated on account of this move," he stated. Vinkesh Gulati, President of the

Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), believes that having the Bharat NCAP rating criteria would emerge as a turning point in the domestic automotive sector in terms of product, technology and safety, since it would provide a platform that would test vehicular safety as per Indian conditions. "There were Indian OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) who were giving lot of importance to passenger safety and getting their vehicle tested under Global NCAP, but lot of MNC OEMs were not interested in this," Mr. Gulati said. He suggested that the grading system be made mandatory for all OEMs so that the choice is entirely left to the customer.

Addressing the issue of export-worthiness, Mr. Thakkar said that the proposed norm may not make a difference, since any vehicle that is exported to the EU or North America needs to be homologated in the respective country. However, India exports a lot of passenger vehicles to Africa and Latin America, because of which prices of vehicles would increase, he said.

If the Bharat NCAP is implemented, domestic testing agencies would conduct tests for MI category of vehicles, that is, passenger vehicles having not more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat, and weighing less than 3.50 tonnes – imported or domestically manufactured. If cleared, it would be applicable from April 1, 2023.

## THE GIST

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■ Bharat NCAP would assign vehicles between one and five stars on parameters such as Adult Occupant Protection (AOP), Child Occupant Protection (COP) and Safety Assist Technologies (SAT).

# NEP will develop skilled and confident youth, says PM

## Modi inaugurates a conference on policy implementation

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the National Education Policy (NEP) focused on imparting skills to students based on their aptitude and choices.

Mr. Modi inaugurated a three-day Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam on the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in Varanasi, which is being attended by over 300 academic, administrative and institutional leaders. He said the the policy would help develop all the human resource necessary for the country's progress.

“Our youth should be skilled, confident and practical, the education policy is preparing the ground for this,” he said. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the country was today one of the fastest growing economies in the world and it was the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world, the Prime Minister noted.

Stating that the NEP, which was introduced after



**Focus on education:** Narendra Modi at the inauguration of the 'Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam' in Varanasi. ■PTI

a gap of 30 years, would be instrumental in realising innumerable possibilities, Mr. Modi said, “The education system created by the British was never part of the Indian ethos. The basic premise of the NEP is to take education out of narrow thinking and connect it with the modern ideas of the 21st century.”

The Prime Minister said the Indian ethos of education was multi-sectoral and the same approach was required in a new system with modern processes. Highlighting the importance of research, he sought a “lab-

to-land” approach.

Mr. Modi said that in the field of alternative medicine, including Ayurveda, there was a need for evidence-based research. Research on solutions to the challenges of ageing societies, building better waste recycling systems and managing climate change also provided a wide range of opportunities, he said.

Among those present were Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

# 'Employee perks free from GST'

CBIC also seeks to spell out enforcement approach for fake invoicing cases

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has clarified that perks provided by employers to employees are not subject to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and emphasised that only penalties can be levied in cases involving fake invoices as no goods are supplied.

Tax experts expect the clarification to bring about a reduction in tax demands and arrests in fake invoicing cases, reining in official overreach that has been contested in several courts. The board detailed the clarifications in a series of circulars issued on Wednesday, following up on decisions taken by the GST Council at its meeting last month.

The confusion on the ap-



**No more grey:** The confusion on the applicability of GST on employee perquisites has persisted for a while. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

plicability of GST on employee perquisites has persisted for a while as transactions between related parties are subject to the tax even where no consideration is involved.

Noting that various representations had been received from field formations

seeking clarifications on various issues, including perquisites provided by employers to employees as per contractual agreements, the board concluded that neither services rendered by employees to employers nor perks provided to them would be subject to GST.

This settled the issue in line with industry's contention that perquisites given as part of a contractual agreement between employer and employee would not be liable to GST, noted KPMG tax partner Abhishek Jain.

Separately, the CBIC responded to pleas from businesses as well as tax officials for clarity on demand and penalty provisions under the Central GST law for transactions involving fake invoices.

"No GST can be recovered from the supplier as no supply of goods/ services was involved, however, penalty shall be leviable," Mr. Jain said on the circular's implications. "Further, the recipient should not be penalised under different provisions of the GST law for the same offence," he noted.

# 'RBI moves to stabilise rupee may face economic hurdles'

## Headwinds to economy reminiscent of 2013 crisis: analysts

**REUTERS**  
NEW DELHI

The central bank's moves to liberalise foreign exchange inflows are unlikely to offer much immediate support to the floundering rupee as inflation pushes higher and the current account deficit threatens to balloon towards multi-year highs.

The Reserve Bank of India announced a slew of measures on Wednesday to bring in dollars, including allowing overseas investors to buy short-term corporate debt and opening of more government securities under the fully accessible route.

The steps came after the RBI's foreign exchange reserves fell by more than \$40

 **Foreign funds have sold more than \$30 billion worth of Indian equities so far in 2022**

billion over the past nine months, largely due to its intervention in the currency market to curb rupee losses.

Still, the rupee has depreciated about 6% against the dollar so far this year, and some analysts said headwinds facing the Indian economy were ominously reminiscent of the 2013 taper tantrum crisis: inflation is at multi-year highs, both current and fiscal accounts are under stress, and there are heavy portfolio outflows amid tightening global finan-

cial conditions.

With inflation expected to keep pressure on the RBI to raise rates, foreign investors are expected to wait and watch how interest rate differentials with the U.S. play out before starting to reinvest in Indian markets.

"Moves to liberalise FX flows and to boost capital account are helpful, (but) they may not have a material impact on flows," said Madhavi Arora, senior economist with Emkay Global. Foreign funds have sold more than \$30 billion worth of Indian equities so far in 2022.

Adding to investors' worries, India's monthly trade deficit shot up to a record of \$25.6 billion in June.

# '12-13% NPAs in loans given to street vendors'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI**

Non-performing assets (NPA) accounted for "12-13%" of the loans disbursed to street vendors under the Prime Minister's Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM-Svanidhi) scheme, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri said on Thursday.

The scheme, which was launched on July 2, 2020, has so far disbursed loans of ₹10,000 each to 30.23 lakh street vendors, of which 11.63 lakh loans have been repaid, according to the official PM-Svanidhi website. Fifty-six loans of ₹50,000 have been disbursed, while none of them have been repaid yet.

At a press conference, Mr. Puri said they [NPAs] were "12-13%", which was not worrying. "The NPAs are manageable," he said.

# Govt. reserves ₹80,000 cr. for States' capex

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

The Centre has earmarked ₹80,000 crore as interest-free loans for States undertaking capital works in the current fiscal.

In her 2022-23 Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' scheme under which total financial assistance of ₹1 lakh crore would be given to States in the form of 50-year, interest-free loans for capital investment projects.

Issuing the guidelines for implementing the assistance scheme, the Finance Ministry said ₹80,000 crore was reserved for capital works to be undertaken by the States.

# RBI measures will help spur overseas fund inflows: Seth

Changes transitory, for a short period, says DEA Secretary

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth on Thursday said the measures taken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) would increase inflows of overseas funds and help strengthen the rupee against the U.S. dollar.

The RBI had on Wednesday raised the overseas borrowing limits for companies and liberalised norms for foreign investments in government bonds as it announced a slew of measures to boost foreign exchange inflows.

Mr. Seth said RBI's measures were transitory and for a short duration, and would help boost foreign currency flows into the country.



Ajay Seth

The RBI had on Wednesday raised the External Commercial Borrowing limit under the automatic route from \$750 million per financial year to \$1.5 billion and eased norms for foreign portfolio investments in the debt market. Mr. Seth also

expressed hope that the global challenges would subside in the short term.

The central bank had said all capital flows barring portfolio investments remained stable and an adequate level of reserves provided a buffer against external shocks.

Since the war in Ukraine broke out in late February, the RBI has dipped into its foreign exchange reserves to shield the rupee from steep depreciation.

The rupee has depreciated 4.1% against the U.S. dollar during the current financial year up to July 5. However, the dip is modest relative to other emerging markets and even major advanced economies.

# Centre to promote dragon fruit cultivation

Plan is to increase cultivation from 3,000 hectares to 50,000 hectares in five years

**A.M. JIGEESH**  
NEW DELHI

Following in the footsteps of the Gujarat and Haryana governments, the Centre has decided to promote the cultivation of dragon fruit, known as a “super fruit” for its health benefits. The Centre feels that considering the cost effectiveness and global demand for the fruit due to its nutritional values, its cultivation can be expanded in India. At present, this exotic fruit is cultivated in 3,000 hectares; the plan is to increase cultivation to 50,000 hectares in five years.

The Gujarat government recently renamed dragon fruit as *kamlam* [lotus] and announced an incentive for farmers who cultivate it. The



Dragon fruit costs up to ₹400 per kg in local markets.

Haryana government also provides a grant for farmers who are ready to plant this exotic fruit variety. The fruit is considered good for diabetic patients, low in calories and high in nutrients like iron, calcium, potassium

and zinc. Addressing a national conclave on the fruit here on Thursday, Union Agriculture Secretary Manoj Ahuja said the demand for the fruit is high in domestic and global markets because of its nutritional values.

## **Win-win situation**

“50,000 hectares in five years is an achievable target. The demand for the fruit will remain. Prices for farmers will also be good. The benefit is that this fruit can be cultivated in degraded and rainfed land,” Mr. Ahuja said. He added that the Centre will assist States in providing good quality planting materials to farmers.

Talking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the conclave, he said the Centre can also

provide specific target-based help to States and farmers under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). “Processing infrastructure can also be developed with the help of the Food Processing Ministry. Its cultivation will be beneficial for farmers and consumers. It is a win-win situation for all,” he added.

According to the authorities, and the Indian Council of Agriculture Research, the fruit plant doesn’t need much water and can be cultivated on dry land, too. Horticulture Commissioner Prabhat Kumar told *The Hindu* that dragon fruit is now sold at a price of ₹400 per kg and the effort is to make it available to consumers for ₹100 per kg.

# Trends show 27% dip in paddy sowing

## Farmers blame rise in fertilizer prices

**A.M. JIGEESH**  
NEW DELHI

Multiple factors such as water scarcity in Punjab and increase in fertilizer prices are considered the reasons for a 27% decrease in paddy sowing till July 1 during this kharif season.

Though recently, Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal had urged the States to encourage farmers to sow paddy in more areas, the Union Agriculture Ministry believes that it is too early to assess any decrease in the acreage of cultivation as the monsoon is not yet active in North India. Farmers' organisations, however, have claimed that the situation is worrisome as farmers in many places have decided not to sow paddy due to unavailability and high prices of essential fertilizers.

They demanded the Centre reduce the prices of fertilizers.

The Centre, however, says that it's too early to predict a decrease in sowing. Union Agriculture Secretary Manoj Ahuja told *The Hindu* on Thursday that the Centre is monitoring the situation. "As the monsoon gets active, sowing will also improve. It is too early to predict a decrease in paddy sowing. We are constantly monitoring the situation," Mr. Ahuja said.

The government data show that till July 1, paddy has been sown on 43.45 lakh

hectares in the country. In 2021, during the corresponding period, the sowing was done on 59.56 lakh hectares. This kharif season, the decrease so far in acreage of paddy is 16.11 lakh hectares (27.05%). The farmers have also been complaining about inadequate supply and high prices for diammonium phosphate (DAP), muriate of potash (MOP) and nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK), the three fertilizers used for paddy.

Government data show that the prices of the three fertilizers have increased due to global situation. The Centre has been maintaining it has ensured availability of fertilizers and regulating prices through subsidies.

Farmers organisations demanded the Centre to reduce the prices of fertilizers and diesel and announce better MSP for rice to attract farmers. "The government has abysmally failed on the fertilizer front in the past seven months. The fertilizer shortage and rise in price has led to tremendous black marketing. DAP and potash are required for rice. Farmers are unable to plant rice if they don't get fertilizers. The mismanagement of the Centre has led to a situation that the food security is in threat," said All India Kisan Sabha president Ashok Dhawale.

# Set up MSP panel as promised, Congress tells Centre

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi government should honour its commitment to the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) of constituting a committee on minimum support price (MSP) for crops and bring out a White Paper on the “prevailing food grain crisis” in the country, the Congress said on Thursday.

Addressing a press confe-

rence at the party headquarters, Rajya Sabha member and Haryana leader Deepender Hooda said his party stood with the demands of farmers and would support them in their agitation.

He said the Congress would extend full support to the SKM that was holding *Vishwasghaat* (betrayal) seminars from July 18 to 31 across the country and would take up their cause in

Parliament.

Slamming the Modi government over the tardy procurement of foodgrains, Mr. Hooda claimed that food-grain stocks in India were at 15-year low and per capita stocks at a 50-year low. This had forced the Centre to reduce wheat allocations to 10 States, including BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, he alleged.

“We want to tell the go-

vernment to immediately set up the MSP committee as promised to farmers by the Prime Minister to provide legal guarantee to minimum support price. The government should also publish a White Paper on the current crisis of foodgrains, clearly spelling out who has benefited from the export of wheat. The White Paper should also be on the procurement and public distribution system

policy in the country,” he told presspersons.

## **Agnipath scheme**

The Haryana Congress leader alleged that the government was playing around with national security by launching the Agnipath recruitment policy and with food security by allowing export of wheat.

“The BJP government’s motto is to stand with some

big industrialists and serve them while exploiting farmers and farm labourers,” Mr. Hooda said.

Taking a dig at the Modi government, the Congress leader said the promise of doubling farmers’ income and setting up a committee on MSP was now in the same category of “unfulfilled” promises of providing two crore jobs and bringing black money from abroad.

# Just fine

Justice for environmental crimes must be dispensed quickly and equitably

The Union Environment Ministry, tasked with safeguarding India's forests and its environmental assets, proposes to amend sections of key environmental legislation and make them less threatening to potential violators. India has eight cornerstone pieces of legislation that define a regulatory framework to ensure that natural resources are not wantonly exploited, acts of pollution are apprehended and there is a mechanism to punish and deter violators. Under provisions in the existing legislation, violators are punishable with imprisonment up to five years or with a fine up to one lakh rupees, or with both. Were violations to continue, there is an additional fine of up to ₹5,000 for every day during which such failure or contravention continues after the conviction. There is also a provision for jail terms to extend to seven years. Under the new amendments proposed, the Ministry says it wants to weed out "fear of imprisonment for simple violations", and therefore have such violations invite only monetary fines. However, serious environmental crimes that cause grave injury or death would invite imprisonment under the Indian Penal Code. These penalties would be decided by an 'adjudication officer' and transferred to an 'Environment Protection Fund'. Moreover, the quantum of potential fines has been raised from beyond the one lakh rupees to as much as five crore rupees. These proposals are not yet law and have been placed in the public domain for feedback.

The question of whether the threat of imprisonment acts as a deterrent has a long history with both proponents and opponents. The proposed amendments do not cover the destruction of forests and wildlife, which make up a substantial fraction of environmental crime, and would continue to invite existing penal provisions. Research on environmental crime in the United States and Europe suggests that fining is the most common mode of punishment. India has a long history of corporate violations as well as a woefully slow redress system. An analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment found that Indian courts took between 9-33 years to clear a backlog of cases for environmental violations. Starting with 2018, close to 45,000 cases were pending for trial and another 35,000 cases were added in that year. More than 90% of cases were pending for trial in five of seven major environmental laws. While fines could theoretically help with faster redress, large environmental fines will continue to be contested in courts, adding to the prevailing practice of tardy justice. The threat of imprisonment might have acted as a deterrent in India where the effectiveness of environment regulation is under par. Justice for environmental crimes must be dispensed quickly and equitably before tinkering with the law to make it less foreboding.

# Odisha eyes Forest Act implementation by 2024

## Target is to have 587 revenue villages

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government is chasing an ambitious target of completing implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) by granting all kinds of rights mandated under the historic Act by 2024.

Addressing a national consultation on 'Potential of Forest Rights Act in the Context of Tribal Development: Implementation Gaps and Way Forward' here on Thursday, Odisha's ST and SC Development Secretary Ranjana Chopra said, "We are confident enough to launch Mission 2024 for FRA where we are committing ourselves to saturate the State of Odisha by granting all kinds of forest rights whether it is individual, community or habitat."

"All tribals will be granted their rightful ownership. The Mission is under scrutiny by the Finance Department and the Planning and Convergence Department. I

think we would soon be able to launch the ambitious programme. By 2024, we would be able to achieve the mandate given to the State government under the FRA," said Ms. Chopra.

"The journey which started in 2006 would hopefully conclude on a happy note by 2024," she said. The State government has set a target to convert 587 forest villages into revenue villages in the targeted time. As of now, only 15 forest villages have been recognised as revenue villages.

### 'Records digitised'

"All old records of rights [land pattas] have been digitised and the future pattas would also be digitised. A dedicated website has been hosted to keep all records. The whole process of demarcation of land and reaching out to the last citizen has been facilitated by non-government organisation partners," said Ms. Chopra.

# Plastic cups, straws still in use in Capital despite SUP ban

Current focus is to break the manufacture and supply chain of SUP items and eventually shift to end users: govt. official

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

A week after the ban on 19 single-use plastic (SUP) items kicked in, many of the banned items, including plastic cups, straws and plates, were still seen being used across the city, *The Hindu* has found.

Although a number of shops and roadside carts were using alternatives, their owners complained that the alternatives are costlier.

The banned SUP items were spotted at roadside stalls or shops in Raj Ghat, ITO, Ring Road and near Vallabhbai Patel Chest Institute.

The 19 SUP items, which were banned from July 1, in-



Many complained that the alternatives to single-use plastic (SUP) are costlier. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

clude plastic and polystyrene cups, spoons, forks, knives, straws and plates, and plastic films over cigarette and sweet boxes.

Sarath\*, who sells coconut water near ITO, had two

stacks of plastic cups on his hand cart. "When the ban kicked in, I already had over ₹1,000 worth of plastic cups with me. Once I finish this stock, I will switch to paper cups," he said.

When the ban kicked in, I already had over ₹1,000 worth of plastic cups with me. Once I finish this stock, I will switch to paper cups

SARATH\*  
Coconut water seller

Explaining that paper cups are increasing his expenditure, Mr. Sarath said, "One plastic cup costs me 60-80 paise and a paper cup will cost me over ₹1.5."

Mr. Sarath added that officials from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had visited the area two days ago and told him and other vendors to transition out of the

banned items by July 10.

At two shops near Raj Ghat, which is about 1 km from the Delhi Secretariat, two roadside carts selling lemonade and juice were found to be using plastic cups too, although both of them had paper cups. "This is from my old stock. Also, some customers ask for plastic cups," said one of the sellers.

When contacted, a Delhi government official said they are currently not focusing on targeting end-users. "Our focus currently is to break the manufacture and supply chain of these items. We will eventually shift our focus on end users too," the official said.

At a shop selling juice and

shakes near Vallabhbai Patel Chest Institute in North Delhi, shakes were being served in paper cups but with plastic straws.

In Raj Ghat, a seller was spotted using polystyrene plates – one of the 19 banned items – to sell *chaat*. Cigarette boxes wrapped in thin plastic sheets, another banned product, were also found being sold in different areas of the city.

Until July 5, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi had seized over 1,450 kg of banned SUP items from stockists and sellers, according to data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee.

(\*Names changed to protect identity)

# In Bali meeting with Wang, Jaishankar raises LAC issues

Amid talks, India, China spar over Dalai Lama birthday

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Three months after they met in New Delhi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi held talks on the sidelines of the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bali on Thursday.

While the talks that lasted an hour appeared to be cordial, New Delhi and Beijing crossed swords over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama, and Enforcement Directorate (ED) searches at the offices of the Chinese company Vivo in India.

Mr. Jaishankar said the meeting was his first engagement after reaching the Indonesian resort city, where the G-20 summit will be held in November, and that the two sides discussed resolving the border stand-off that began in April 2020.

"EAM [External Affairs Minister] called for an early resolution of all the outstanding issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh. Recalling the disengagement



**Looking ahead:** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Indonesia. ■PTI

achieved in some friction areas, EAM reiterated the need to sustain the momentum to complete disengagement from all the remaining areas to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas," a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The statement added that the two Ministers agreed that they should continue regular contact at military and diplomatic meetings, and looked ahead to the next 16th round of Senior Commanders meeting at the

Chushul-Moldo border point "at an early date".

The Chinese readout made no mention of the LAC crisis, instead emphasising Mr. Wang's remarks calling on both sides to "strengthen coordination and cooperation and jointly promote more democratic international relations and a fairer international order". He said both sides had "maintained communication and exchanges" and "effectively managed differences".

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# Jaishankar raises LAC issues in Bali meeting

The Senior Commanders' meeting on March 11 had been unable to make much forward movement, though previous rounds have seen the disengagement of Indian Army and People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops at Pangong North and Galwan and Gogra post at PP17-A, after the PLA transgressions and killings at Galwan in the summer of 2020.

Disengagement at Hot Springs point or PP15, as well as Depsang and Demchok areas occupied by the Chinese side, still remains to be resolved, according to officials.

"EAM reiterated that India-China relationship is best served by observing the three mutuals – mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests," the MEA added.

As with their last meeting, when Mr. Wang visited Delhi in March, Mr. Jaishankar discussed other issues with him, including the status of Indian students who have not been able to return to China after the COVID-19 lockdowns, and "stressed the need for expediting the process and facilitating the return of students", the MEA said.

Even as the meeting took place in Bali, China lodged a strong protest over birthday celebrations for the Dalai Lama in India on Wednesday, particularly the engagement of "Indian officials" with the Tibetan leader.

Mr. Modi telephoned the Dalai Lama, while the Himachal CM attended the celebrations in Dharamshala. Minister of State Meenakshi Lekhi attended an event in Delhi to mark the day.

"The Indian side should fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama and abide by its commitment to China,

speak and act prudently and stop using Tibet related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs," said Zhao Lijan, Chinese MFA spokesperson said.

## 'Consistent stance'

Asked about the protest, the MEA spokesperson said the birthday messages were part of India's "consistent policy" to treat the Dalai Lama as an "honoured guest" who was accorded courtesies and freedom to conduct religious and spiritual activities. China had also issued a strong statement on the ED searches on Vivo, a Chinese mobile phone company, saying that "frequent investigations by the Indian side into Chinese enterprises not only disrupt" businesses, but also "chills the confidence and willingness of market entities from other countries, including Chinese enterprises to invest and operate in India".

Denying the charge, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi asked companies operating in India to "follow the law of the land".

## India's support

Foreign Minister Wang Yi also "appreciated" India's support during China's BRICS Chairship this year, the MEA said, including a virtual summit which Mr. Modi attended, hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The Jaishankar-Wang meeting, as well as another engagement in Tashkent for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers' meeting on July 28-29 are expected to discuss the course ahead for a possible Modi-Xi meeting later this year at the SCO summit in mid-September and G-20 in November, depending on whether both leaders attend.

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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-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
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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;
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### General Studies Paper II

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J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
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P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
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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
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