



USD vs INR
1947 to 2020)

VEDHIK

DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

18 - AUG - 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.

CONTENTS

- GSP 02 B Editorials - Data opportunity at the G20
- GSP 02 B Editorials - This maritime partnership is still a work in progress
- GSP 02 B News - India, China troops to take part in Russia war games in Vostok
- GSP 02 C Editorials - The geopolitics of the Fourth Taiwan Crisis
- GSP 02 E News - SC reserves verdict on 'same-day sentencing'
- GSP 03 A News - Centre restores farm loan interest subsidy as rates rise
- GSP 03 A News - Credit guarantee plan expanded to aid hospitality, related sectors
- GSP 03 A News - Rupee strengthens 29 paise to 79.45 to a dollar

- GSP 03 F News - Centre projects record production of rice
- GSP 03 L Editorials - What is causing Arctic warming
- GSP 03 P News - Delhi's PM2.5 levels worst in the world
- GSP 03 W News - MHA overrules Minister's tweet on providing flats to Rohingya Part I
- GSP 03 W News - MHA overrules Minister's tweet on providing flats to Rohingya Part II

Data opportunity at the G20

The Indian Government should present a holistic agenda that embeds data collection and sharing



ARINDRAJIT BASU & KARTHIK NACHIAPPAN

The global politics of data is rapidly evolving as leading and emerging digital economies like the European Union (EU), the U.S., India, Indonesia, and South Africa strive to protect, monetise, and leverage data collected within their territories for domestic purposes. The age of borderless data with limited or no government control, once an aspiration, appears behind us.

Increasing privacy and security concerns coupled with economic interests have compelled governments to institute rules and standards that govern and restrict cross-border flows with natural implications for negotiations on global trade and commerce. Indeed, the sheer amount of data being generated and shared globally has necessitated governments to exert more control over the use, sharing, and cross-border flow of data. According to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF), data localisation laws have more than doubled from 2017 to 2021, indicating that states seek and want increasing levels of regulatory control over data.

Creation of single data market

Data regulation efforts transcend data localisation. Relaxing its deference to self-regulation by firms, Joe Biden's administration recently issued an executive order on promoting competition in the American economy that pushed for the use of antitrust policy to meet the challenges posed by the rise of dominant platforms, and surveillance. European policymakers have introduced a bevy of digital rules that place individual users centre-stage, and enhancing their data security. Through the proposed Data Act, the EU hopes to become an unparalleled data power by creating a single data market, setting robust standards and deploying the EU's collective data for their own use.

As a rising 'data market' with critical stakes in multilateral and regional negotiations on data, how can India negotiate data when it assumes leadership of the G20?

The G-20 appears as a viable platform to discuss data, particularly sharing and transfer, given seemingly converging positions on data governance amongst major G-7 powers and emerging economies as the state finds a greater role in regulating data. Moreover, the G-20's track record as the apex forum to dis-

cuss global economic issues gives it legitimacy and having the top (digital) economies makes it an appropriate forum to discuss data. The G20 does not create binding rules but serves as a platform to catalyse and inject new thinking around critical current issues.

Data sovereignty

India was way ahead of the 'data sovereignty' curve, brandishing it to justify domestic policy-making and burnishing this stance at various international discussions, long before it became fashionable across northern jurisdictions. Since 2017, India has attempted to incubate governance of non-personal data, personal data, e-commerce regulation and artificial intelligence (AI) with a preference to harness "India's data for India's development." These policies, including the recently withdrawn Personal Data Protection Bill, are works in progress but this does not take away from the vast ecosystem of actors – including experts, civil society, and industry actively engaging with and attempting to shape digital policy-making.

To underscore political rhetoric and drive global data discussions at the G20, the Indian government should present a holistic agenda that embeds data collection and sharing within a broader framework that prioritises digital security, innovation, and citizen rights.

For instance, the Reserve Bank of India's data localisation directive has been in place for four years now. An empirical assessment of how this has impacted both start-ups, big technology companies, and users could serve as a useful example. Has localisation achieved requisite security and economic benefits? Or has it stifled digital innovation? Second, India's digital economy stewardship must transcend data localisation by highlighting best practices on data protection, competition law, data stewardship, and responsible artificial intelligence both in India and other G20 countries. The ongoing effort to redraft the Personal Data Protection Bill and embed it within a 'more comprehensive framework' that addresses related concerns like cybersecurity must serve as an urgent domestic priority, and could lend weight to India's G-20 data approach.

By adding nuance to prevailing 'data' narratives and enabling countries with different views to express themselves and engage meaningfully on critical questions, India's G-20 stint would mark a key phase in the global digital economy.

Arindrajit Basu is a Non-Resident Research Fellow at the Centre for Internet & Society. Karthik Nachiappan is a Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore.

This maritime partnership is still a work in progress

It is far from clear whether India-U.S. ties are headed towards a comprehensive partnership in the Indian Ocean littorals



ABHIJIT SINGH

The docking of the USNS *Charles Drew*, a United States Navy dry cargo ship, for repairs at an Indian facility in Chennai last week, marks an important first in the India-U.S. military relationship. Although bilateral strategic ties have advanced considerably over the past decade, reciprocal repair of military vessels was still a milestone that had not been crossed. With the arrival of *Charles Drew* at the Larsen and Toubro (L&T) facility at the Kattupalli dockyard, India and the U.S. seem to have moved past a self-imposed restriction.

Signs of a broader template

As some see it, a renewed sense of optimism now drives India-U.S. relations. During the bilateral 2+2 dialogue held in April this year, the two countries agreed to explore the possibilities of using Indian shipyards for the repair and maintenance of ships of the U.S. Military Sealift Command (MSC). In the weeks following that meeting, the MSC carried out an exhaustive audit of Indian yards, and cleared the facility at Kattupalli for the repair of U.S. military vessels.

The docking of a U.S. military vessel at an Indian facility has both functional and geopolitical implications. Functionally, it signals a more efficient leveraging of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) – the military logistics agreement India

signed with the U.S. in 2017. Thus far, India-U.S. cooperation under the pact had largely been confined to the exchange of fuel and stores during joint exercises and relief operations. With the arrival of a U.S. military vessel at an Indian dockyard, the template of logistics cooperation seems to have broadened. There is a good possibility now that India would seek reciprocal access to repair facilities at U.S. bases in Asia and beyond.

Many in India, meanwhile, are seeing the U.S. ship's docking as a global endorsement of Indian shipbuilding and ship-repair capabilities. In recent years, New Delhi has sought to showcase its private shipyards, in particular the L&T, which has developed significant ship design and construction capability at its yards in Hazira (Gujarat) and Kattupalli. At a time when the Indian Navy has taken delivery of the INS *Vikrant*, the country's first indigenously constructed aircraft carrier, the spirits of Indian shipbuilders are already riding high. As Indian observers see it, the presence of the USNS *Charles Drew* in an Indian dockyard is a boost for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make-in-India'.

The political signal

Politically, too, the development is noteworthy, as it signals a consolidation of the India-U.S. partnership, and the Quadrilateral (India, Japan, Australia and the United States) Security Dialogue. Despite its intention to strengthen logistics exchanges among Quad members, New Delhi has desisted from offering foreign warships access to Indian facilities. Notwithstanding the odd refuelling of foreign warships and aircraft in Indian facilities, India's military establishment



has been wary of any moves that would create the impression of an anti-China alliance. Yet, Indian decision makers evidently are willing to be more ambitious with the India-U.S. strategic relationship. New Delhi's decision to open up repair facilities for the U.S. military suggests greater Indian readiness to accommodate the maritime interests of India's Quad partners.

For Washington, the strategic implications of the docking in India are no less tangible. This is an incremental step forward in the U.S. moving to bolster its military presence in the Eastern Indian Ocean. Recent assessments of the evolving security picture in the Indian Ocean point to the possibility of China's military expansion in the Asian littorals, holding at risk U.S. and European assets. Reportedly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been readying to play a more active security role in the region. New Delhi's offer of repair services for U.S. military vessels could kickstart a process that would culminate in India opening up its naval bases for friendly foreign warships. At a time when New Delhi has shied away from backing the U.S. position in the Russia-Ukraine war, greater India-U.S. synergy in the Indian Ocean littorals could gal-

vanise the supporters of closer bilateral ties. It would revive talk about the bilateral as a defining partnership in the Indian Ocean, and of India's potential to counter China in the Indian Ocean. Coming on the heels of the delivery of the first two U.S. manufactured MH-60R (Multi Role Helicopters) to India (with a third craft due to arrive later this month) the visit of the USNS *Charles Drew* has given Indian and U.S. observers much to be optimistic about.

CMF cooperation

Meanwhile, the Indian Navy has formally commenced its cooperation with the Bahrain-based multilateral partnership, Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), as an 'associate member'. This comes months after India had announced its intention to join the grouping in furtherance of its regional security goals. India's political and military leadership is seeing this as a demonstration of Indian commitment towards the collective responsibility of ensuring security in the shared commons.

Indian analysts, however, ought not to overread developments, as extrapolating from perceived trends can often be misleading. The reality is that the India-U.S. relationship is still some way from crossing a critical threshold. For all the hype in the media surrounding India's membership of the CMF, the modalities of the engagement are still being worked out. The Indian Navy, it seems, has stopped short of formally joining the group, of which the Pakistan Navy is a key member. According to the CMF website, "associate members provide the assistance that they can offer, if they have the time and capacity to do so, whilst

undertaking national tasking". This is not unlike India's earlier model of cooperation, whereby the Indian Navy worked alongside CMF and other security forces in the Western Indian Ocean on a need-to basis – all while operating independently, and under the broader banner of the United Nations. Despite increased engagement with the U.S. Navy, India's liaison officer at the U.S. Navy component (NAVCENT, or the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command) in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) is still the military attaché at the Indian Embassy in Bahrain.

Limited in scope now

Even with the docking of the U.S. vessel at Kattupalli, Indian analysts ought to recognise that the U.S. military sealift command has no warships. The MSC is charged with delivering supplies to U.S. bases, and deals only with transport vessels of the U.S. Navy. The agreement with India for the repair of U.S. military vessels is limited to cargo ships. U.S. decision makers are unlikely to seek Indian facilities for repair and replenishment of U.S. destroyers and frigates in the near future until New Delhi is clear about the need for strategic cooperation with the U.S. Navy.

By many accounts, then, the India-U.S. maritime relationship remains a work in progress. There has doubtless been some movement ahead, but it is far from clear whether navy-to-navy ties are headed towards a wide-ranging and comprehensive partnership in the Indian Ocean littorals.

Abhijit Singh is a retired Indian naval officer and Senior Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi

India, China troops to take part in Russia war games in Vostok

The drills would include airborne troops, bombers and military cargo aircraft

ANANTH KRISHNAN
BEIJING

Indian and Chinese troops are set to take part in military exercises in Russia later this month, the first such major war games to be hosted by Russia since its invasion of Ukraine in February.

China's Defence Ministry in Beijing on Wednesday in a statement announced the participation of People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops in the exercises, adding that "India, Belarus, Tajikistan, Mongolia and other countries will also participate".

India has also indicated its participation in the war games.

There was no response from the Indian Army on Wednesday to questions on India's participation.

Russia's Defence Ministry said last month the Vostok



Russia's Vladimir Putin shaking hands with a Chinese serviceman during a joint exercise in Vostok in 2018. ■AP

(East) 2022 exercises will be held from August 30 to September 5 in 13 training grounds in Russia's Eastern Military District, and that the manoeuvres would include units of airborne troops, long-range bombers and military cargo aircraft.

It remains unclear if Indian and Chinese troops will

be present together or if they will take part in different drills which will be spread across the 13 different training grounds.

Deepening cooperation
The Chinese Defence Ministry statement noted the exercises were "unrelated to the current international and re-

gional situation" and were aimed at "deepening the pragmatic and friendly cooperation with the militaries of participating countries, enhancing the level of strategic coordination of all participating parties, and enhancing the ability to deal with various security threats".

Indian and Chinese troops have remained in a stand-off that has lasted for more than two years along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh following the transgressions by the PLA in April 2020.

Disengagement has taken place in some areas along the LAC but talks to restore the status quo in the remaining friction areas in Hot Springs, Demchok and Depsang have been slow-moving.

The geopolitics of the Fourth Taiwan Crisis

If China loses Taiwan for good, Beijing's attempts to establish regional hegemony would be complicated further



STANLY JOHNY

At the 16th Supreme State Council Meeting on April 15, 1959, Mao Zedong told the delegates a story called ‘The Cocky Scholar Sitting at Night’. A young scholar was reading in his room. A ghost, with its long tongue stretching out, appeared by the window. It wanted to scare the scholar. But the scholar took his ink brush, painted his face “as dark as that of Zhang Fei”, the dreaded third century Han dynasty general, and stared back at the ghost with his tongue reaching out. The ghost eventually disappeared. Mao told this story to explain why he had ordered the shelling of the Kinmen and Matsu islands, lying along the mainland but governed by Taiwan, a year earlier. The ghost in Mao’s story was the United States. “Never be afraid of the ghost. The more you are afraid, the more difficult it is to survive,” he said.

A brief history

China’s response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan on August 2 reminds one of Mao’s story. Its unprecedented military drills around the island and the repeated threats of using force for unification suggest that China’s views on the Taiwan issue and the U.S.’s role in it have not changed a bit over the years, even though it never managed to scare away the “ghost” and had to make several tactical retreats in the past. Mao wanted to be the leader who achieved “national reunification”. But he knew that it was practically impossible for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), which did not even have a proper navy in the ear-

ly 1950s, to cross the Taiwan Strait and retake the island. Besides this, U.S. President Harry S. Truman’s decision to send the U.S. Navy’s Seventh Fleet to the Strait had created a buffer between the communist-ruled mainland and Kuomintang-held Taiwan. What he could do was to shell the Kinmen and Matsu islands, in 1954 and then in 1958, triggering the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises. However, taking the island by force remained a distant dream.

By the time China started building military capacities (including a nuclear bomb), the geopolitical dynamics of the region had begun shifting. In the 1970s, faced with the Soviet problem, China’s focus shifted to bettering its ties with the U.S. and, later, on its own economic development. The Taiwan issue was put on the back-burner without making compromises on the goal of unification. The issue would resurface in 1995 when Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui visited Cornell University in the U.S. China started military drills and missile tests in the Strait, triggering the Third Strait Crisis. But U.S. President Bill Clinton responded by sending U.S. aircraft carriers to the Strait, eventually forcing Beijing to de-escalate. For China, it was another crude reminder of the gap between its objectives and actual strength. “The ghost” was still the king of the Taiwan Strait.

New normal

Over the past 27 years, the regional situation has changed dramatically. If the Soviet Union brought China and the U.S. closer in the second half of the Cold War, the successor state of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, today, is not only one of China’s closest partners but also a power that militarily challenges the U.S.-led post-Cold War security architecture in Europe. If Mr. Clinton had confidently sent aircraft carriers to the



Taiwan Strait in response to China’s drills in the 1990s, U.S. President Joe Biden would not dare do that today without factoring in the possibility of a military conflict with the world’s largest Navy. The sharpest manifestation of these changes was the Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis, unleashed by China’s response to Ms. Pelosi’s recent visit to the island.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly said in recent months that the U.S. would come to Taiwan’s defence if attacked. Every time Mr. Biden made the remark, the White House issued a statement explaining that the U.S.’s policy of strategic ambiguity (being ambiguous on the question of whether the U.S. would come to Taiwan’s defence) had not changed. But Mr. Biden’s repeated statements suggest that U.S. policy is becoming less and less ambiguous than certain. Against this already tense background, China viewed a visit by an American leader (who is second in the line of succession to the presidency) to an island which it sees as a breakaway province as a clear act of provocation.

For China, “the ghost” has been incrementally violating the *status quo*. And it responded by establishing a new normal. Its warships and jets breached the median line of the Taiwan Strait, rendering it meaningless. The drills were held in the territorial waters and airspace claimed by Taiwan. China’s missiles flew over the island. As Taiwan’s Foreign Mi-

nister Joseph Wu put it, “China has openly declared its ownership of the Taiwan Strait.”

China sees Taiwan as the last vestige of its “century of humiliation” that began with its defeat in the first Opium War (1839-42). And the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wants the island back for historical, political and geopolitical reasons. Historically, the Party sees Taiwan as always a part of China. It was a part of imperial China before it became a Japanese colony in 1895. When Japan was defeated in the Second World War, Taiwan was returned to the nationalist Republic of China, ruled by the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang supporters fled to Taiwan in 1949 after they lost the civil war to the communists in the mainland. Since then, Taiwan has remained a self-ruled island, while “national reunification” has stayed one of the most important promises and objectives of the CCP.

Politically, no Chinese leader, not even Xi Jinping who is arguably the most powerful leader since Mao, can compromise on the Taiwan question without damaging their authority, career and legacy. On the contrary, Mr. Xi, who is expected to get an unusual third term in the 20th Party Congress later this year, would like to go down in history as a leader who achieved what even Mao could not do.

On hegemony

Geopolitically, Taiwan is critical for China’s great power ambition. No country can become a global superpower without establishing regional hegemony. The U.S. is protected by the world’s two largest oceans – the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean – and has successfully established hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. The Soviet Union had enjoyed hegemony in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea. On the contrary, China,

despite its military capabilities, is a caged naval power in a crowded neighbourhood. And if it loses Taiwan for good, which is just 180 kilometres from its mainland, China’s attempts to establish regional hegemony would be complicated further. So, it would like control of the island not only to fulfil a historical promise (political benefits for the leader or, as many have pointed out, taking control of the global semiconductor supplies), but also to shore up its geopolitical stature as a great power in the western Pacific. The question is whether China thinks the time has come to take risks to meet its objectives.

This does not mean that military action would be easy for China. Taiwan has been outside its control since 1949. Even if China takes Taiwan, keeping it under its thumb would be challenging, given the island’s topography and nationalist groups. And there is no geographical contiguity from the mainland to Taiwan, which could continue to pose security challenges. Moreover, any strategic miscalculation would prove counterproductive to China’s standing in the region, like what has happened with misadventurous peak powers in the past. But the counter-arguments are also equally persuasive.

China thinks the strategic environment around Taiwan has shifted to its favour, with a window of opportunity to make the move as the U.S. is caught in a triangular entanglement – its failures in the Muslim world, its desire to defeat Russia in Europe and a strategy to contain China’s rise in the Indo-Pacific. Once the structures of the new Cold War are in place and Taiwan emerges as a front line, it would be as difficult for China to get the island back as it was for the German or Korean unification under the communists. This is what is making the Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis the most dangerous one.

stanly.johny@thehindu.co.in

SC reserves verdict on ‘same-day sentencing’

‘Must give every chance to avoid gallows’

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday raised doubts about whether a person should be sentenced to death on the same day he or she is convicted of a crime.

Noting that death penalty is “irreversible”, a three-judge Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit asked if trial judges ought to pause and give every possible opportunity to a convict to avoid the gallows before allowing the State to take his or her life.

The Supreme Court reserved its judgment on the question of “same-day sentencing” after a two-hour long hearing. The cardinal issue is whether a convict, sentenced to death merely hours after conviction, has enough time to present miti-

gating circumstances which led him to commit the crime.

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal had opposed same-day sentencing, even suggesting that the entire proceedings should be adjourned after the stage of conviction in cases in which a person can be put to death as a form of punishment if found guilty. The defence team could use the time to collect mitigating factors.

As of now, no effort is ever made to dig deeper into a convict’s childhood experiences, multigenerational history of physical and mental health issues, exposure to traumatic events and other familial, social and cultural factors crucial in order to undertake an individualised sentencing enquiry.

Centre restores farm loan interest subsidy as rates rise

Govt. to allocate ₹34,856 cr. more from 2022-23 to 2024-25

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to restore the interest subvention on short-term agriculture loans to 1.5% for all financial institutions, including cooperative banks.

The Centre said the increase in interest subvention support required an additional budgetary provision of ₹34,856 crore for the period of 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Explaining the rationale behind the decision, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said as the Reserve Bank of India had recently increased the repo rate, an intervention was necessary to maintain the interest rate on short-term agriculture loans at 7%.

He said the Centre's sup-



port to banks for the interest subvention scheme was stopped in May 2020 as the banks were able to provide such loans at 7%.

“Thus, interest subvention of 1.5% will be provided to lending institutions (public sector banks, private sector banks, small finance banks, regional rural banks, cooperative banks and computerised primary agriculture cooperatives directly

ceded with commercial banks) for the financial years 2022-23 to 2024-25 for lending short-term agri-loans up to ₹3 lakh to the farmers,” the government said.

The Centre said the increase in interest subvention would ensure sustainability of credit flow in the agriculture sector as well as financial health and viability of the lending institutions, ensuring adequate agriculture credit in the rural economy.

“Banks will be able to absorb increase in cost of funds and will be encouraged to grant loans to farmers for short-term agriculture requirements and enable more farmers to get the benefit of agriculture credit. This will also lead to generation of employment.”

Credit guarantee plan expanded to aid hospitality, related sectors

Loan cover of ₹50,000 cr. for sustenance, recovery of firms dented by COVID-19'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved an enhancement of ₹50,000 crore in the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), raising its limit to ₹5 lakh crore, with the additional amount set to be deployed for enterprises in the hospitality and related sectors that were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of August 5, loans of ₹3.67 lakh crore had been sanctioned under the ECLGS, which was introduced to provide guarantees for additional credit needs of businesses hit by lockdowns and disruptions since the onset



A leg up: Demand remains subdued for the contact-intensive sectors while others have recovered faster. ■ VIBHAV BIRWATKAR

of the pandemic in 2020.

The Cabinet decided that the additional amount of ₹50,000 crore would be made applicable to enterprises in hospitality and related sectors till March 31,

2023. This step had been announced in this year's Union Budget. "The enhancement is expected to provide much needed relief to enterprises in these sectors by incentivising lending institutions to

provide additional credit of up to ₹50,000 crore at low cost," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The pandemic had adversely affected contact-intensive sectors, and demand has continued to be subdued for them even as other sectors have returned to the recovery path faster.

Justifying the need for interventions for such businesses' 'sustenance and recovery', the Ministry added that their revival was also necessary for supporting the overall economic rebound, taking into account their high employment intensity as well as their linkages with other sectors.

Rupee strengthens 29 paise to 79.45 to a dollar

'Lower oil prices and inflation help'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The rupee gained 29 paise to settle at 79.45 against the U.S. dollar on Wednesday as heavy buying in domestic equities and persistent foreign capital inflows aided investor sentiment.

Besides, softening crude oil prices and easing inflationary pressures supported the rupee, foreign exchange traders said.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.06%.

The benchmark BSE Sensex gained 417.92 points, or 0.7%, to close at 60,260.13. Foreign investors have continued to invest in Indian equities and pumped in ₹22,452 crore in the first two



weeks of this month.

"The Indian rupee is well supported following lower crude oil prices and foreign fund inflows," said Dilip Parmar, research analyst, HDFC Securities. "However, traders are cautious ahead of FOMC minutes and expect corporate dollar outflows in the coming days which could limit the upside in the rupee," he added.

Centre projects record production of rice

Maize, gram, pulses, rapeseed and sugarcane could also witness high yields, says Agriculture Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Agriculture Ministry released on Wednesday the fourth advance estimates of production of major agricultural crops for 2021-22. The Ministry said the production of foodgrains in the country is estimated at 315.72 million tonnes, which is higher by 4.98 million tonnes than 2020-21.

A Central government release said the production during 2021-22 is higher by 25 million tonnes than the previous five years' (2016-17



Fruitful outcome: The production of rice is expected at 130.29 million tonnes in the country. ■ FILE PHOTO

to 2020-21) average production of foodgrains.

"Record production is es-

pulses, rapeseed and must-
ard, oilseeds and sugar-
cane," it said.

Union Agriculture and

Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the record production of so many crops is the result of the farmer-friendly policies of the Centre and the hard work of the farmers and the diligence of the scientists.

Wheat output

While the estimate of foodgrains production is 315.72 million tonnes, the production of rice is expected at 130.29 million tonnes, which, according to the Centre, is a record.

Wheat production could

touch 106.84 million tonnes and for coarse cereals it could be 50.90 million tonnes. "Total production of rice during 2021-22 is estimated at record 130.29 million tonnes. It is higher by 13.85 million tonnes than the last five years' average production of 116.44 million tonnes. Production of wheat during 2021-22 is estimated at 106.84 million tonnes. It is higher by 2.96 million tonnes than the last five years' average wheat production of 103.88 million tonnes," the release said.

EXPLAINER

What is causing Arctic warming?

Why is the Greenland ice sheet melting at an alarming rate? How is it affecting the monsoons?

THE GIST

RASHMI RAMESH

The story so far: On August 11, Finnish Meteorological Institute researchers published their study in the *Communications Earth & Environment* journal, concluding that the Arctic is heating four times faster than the rest of the planet. The warming is more concentrated in the Eurasian part of the Arctic, where the Barents Sea north of Russia and Norway is warming at an alarming rate – seven times faster than the global average. Other studies in 2021 (the American Geophysical Union) and in 2022 (*Geophysical Research Letters*) indicate that the Arctic amplification is four times the global rate. While earlier studies have proved that the Arctic is warming two or three times faster, recent studies show that the region is fast changing and that the best of climate models may not be able to capture the rate of changes and predict it accurately.

In May 2021, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme had warned that the Arctic has warmed three times quicker than the planet.

For several years, the Greenland ice sheet has been melting at an alarming rate. Between July 15 and 17, 2022, the Greenland ice sheet saw a sharp spike in the rate and extent of melting.

A study by a group of Indian and Norwegian scientists found that the reduced sea ice in the Barents-Kara sea region can lead to extreme rainfall events in the latter half of the monsoons, in September and October.

What is Arctic amplification? What causes it? Global warming, the long-term heating of the earth's surface, hastened due to anthropogenic forces or human activities since pre-industrial times and has increased the planet's average temperature by 1.1 degrees Celsius. While changes are witnessed across the planet, any change in the surface air temperature and the net radiation balance tend to produce larger changes at the north and south poles. This phenomenon is known as polar amplification; these changes are more pronounced at the northern latitudes and are known as the Arctic amplification.

Among the many global warming-driven causes for this amplification, the ice-albedo feedback, lapse rate feedback, water vapour feedback and ocean heat transport are the primary causes. Sea ice and snow have high albedo (measure of reflectivity of the surface), implying that they are capable of reflecting most of the solar radiation as opposed to water and land. In the Arctic's case, global warming is resulting in diminishing sea ice. As the sea ice melts, the Arctic Ocean will be more capable of absorbing solar radiation, thereby driving the amplification. The lapse rate or the rate at which the temperature drops with elevation decreases with warming. Studies show that the ice-albedo feedback and the lapse rate feedback are responsible for 40% and 15% of polar amplification respectively.

What do the previous studies say? The extent of Arctic amplification is debated, as studies show various rates of amplification against the global rate. Studies have shown that the Arctic was warming at twice the global rate prior to the beginning of the 21st century. With revised figures, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a 'Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate' in 2019, which said that the 'Arctic surface air temperature has likely increased by more than double the global average over the last two decades.'

In May 2021, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) warned that the Arctic has warmed three times quicker than the planet, and the chance of the sea ice completely disappearing in summers is 10 times greater, if the planet is warmer by two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial levels. The report also said that the average annual temperature in the region increased by 3.1 degrees Celsius compared to the 1 degree Celsius for the planet.

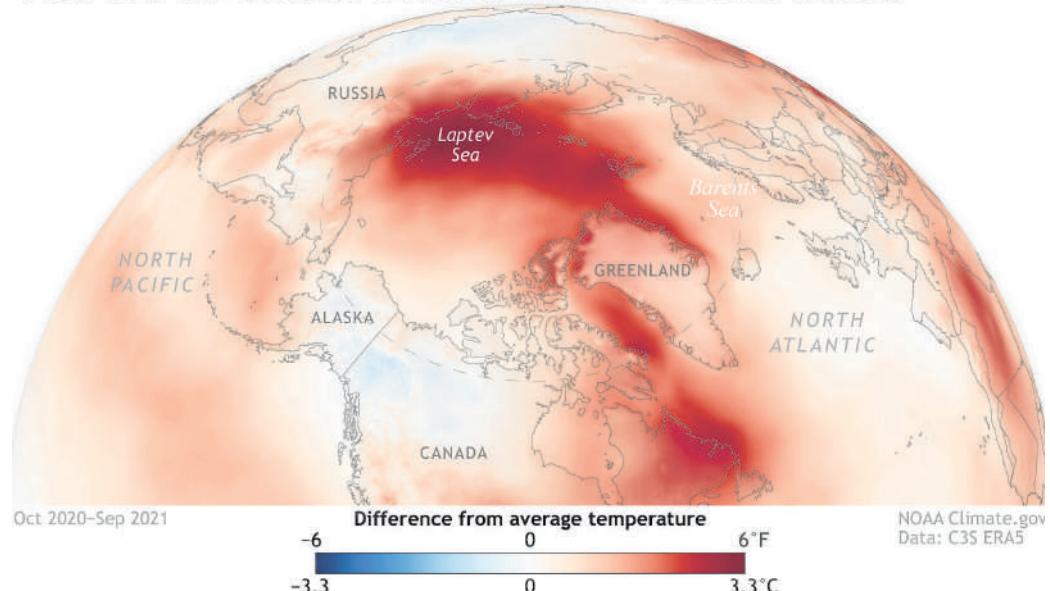
However, recent studies have shown that the mean Arctic amplification saw steep changes in 1986 and 1999, when the ratio reached 4.0, implying four times faster heating than the rest of the planet.

What are the consequences of Arctic warming?

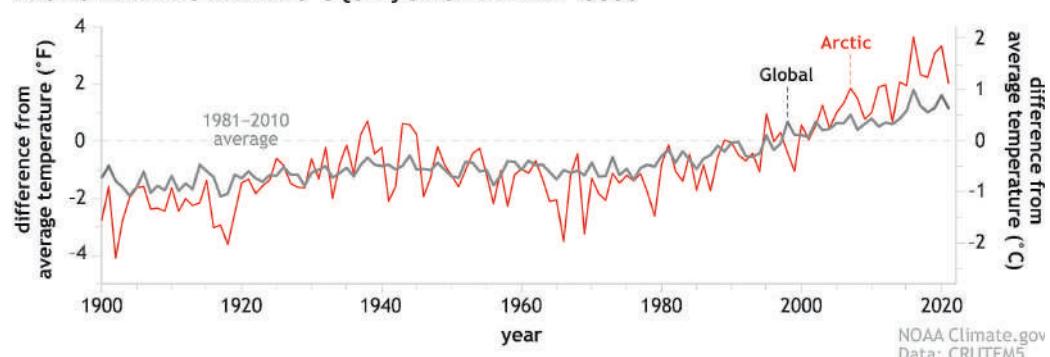
The causes and consequences of Arctic amplification are cyclical – what might be a cause can be a consequence too.

The Greenland ice sheet is melting at an

2021 WAS THE ARCTIC'S SEVENTH WARMEST YEAR ON RECORD



ARCTIC WARMING NEARLY 3°C [5°F] SINCE THE MID-1960s



alarming rate, and the rate of accumulation of sea ice has been remarkably low since 2000, marked by young and thinner ice replacing the old and thicker ice sheets. The Greenland ice sheet saw a sharp spike in the rate and extent of melting between July 15–17 this year. The unusual summer temperatures resulted in a melt of 6 billion tonnes of ice sheet per day, amounting to a total of 18 billion tonnes in a span of three days, enough to cover West Virginia in a foot of water.

Greenlandic ice sheet holds the second largest amount of ice, after Antarctica, and therefore it is crucial for maintaining the sea level. In 2019, this was the single biggest cause for the rise in the sea level, about 1.5 metres. If the sheet melts completely, the sea level would rise by seven metres, capable of subsuming island countries and major coastal cities.

The warming of the Arctic Ocean and the seas in the region, the acidification of water, changes in the salinity levels, are impacting the biodiversity, including the marine species and the dependent species. The warming is also increasing the incidence of rainfall which is affecting the availability and accessibility of lichens to the reindeer. The Arctic amplification is causing widespread starvation and death among the Arctic

fauna.

The permafrost in the Arctic is thawing and in turn releasing carbon and methane which are among the major greenhouse gases responsible for global warming.

Greenlandic ice sheet holds the second largest amount of ice, after Antarctica, and is crucial for maintaining the sea level. In 2019, this was the single biggest cause for the rise in the sea level, about 1.5 metres.

Experts fear that the thaw and the melt will also release the long-dormant bacteria and viruses that were trapped in the permafrost and can potentially give rise to diseases.

What is the impact on India? In recent years, scientists have pondered over the impact the changing Arctic can have on the monsoons in the subcontinent. The link between the two is growing in importance due to the extreme weather events the country faces, and the heavy reliance on rainfall for water and food security.

A study titled 'A possible relation between Arctic sea ice and late season Indian Summer Monsoon Rainfall extremes'

published in 2021 by a group of Indian and Norwegian scientists found that the reduced sea ice in the Barents-Kara sea region can lead to extreme rainfall events in the latter half of the monsoons – in September and October. The changes in the atmospheric circulation due to diminishing sea ice combined with the warm temperatures in the Arabian Sea contribute to enhanced moisture and drive extreme rainfall events. In 2014, India deployed IndARC, India's first moored-underwater observatory in the Kongsfjorden fjord, Svalbard, to monitor the impact of the changes in the Arctic Ocean on the tropical processes such as the monsoons.

According to the World Meteorological Organization's report, 'State of Global Climate in 2021', sea level along the Indian coast is rising faster than the global average rate. One of the primary reasons for this rise is the melting of sea ice in the polar regions, especially the Arctic. The Arctic amplification furthers the idea that "what happens in the Arctic does not remain in the Arctic" and can substantially affect tropical processes far south.

Rashmi Ramesh is a doctoral student at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru and a Visiting Researcher at the Arctic Centre, Finland

'Delhi's PM2.5 levels worst in the world'

Kolkata placed second; study says Indian cities witness high PM emissions, but low NO₂ emissions

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

A global analysis of air quality found that Indian cities, while recording particulate matter emissions (PM2.5) that are among the highest in the world, do relatively better on nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions.

The report, *Air Quality and Health in Cities*, released by U.S.-based Health Effects Institute on Wednesday, analyses pollution and global health effects for more than 7,000 cities around the world, focusing on two of the most harmful pollutants - fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

The report, using data from 2010 to 2019, found that global patterns for exposures to the two key air pollutants were "strikingly different." While exposures to PM2.5 pollution tend to be higher in cities located in low- and middle-income countries, exposure to NO₂ is high across cities in high-in-

come as well as low- and middle-income countries.

Delhi and Kolkata were ranked first and second in the list of top 10 most polluted cities when PM2.5 levels were compared, with Delhi and Kolkata reporting an average annual exposure of (relative to population) of 110 ug/m³ and 84 ug/m³ respectively. ug/m³ refers to microgram per cubic metre.

However no Indian city appeared in the list of top 10 - or even top 20 - polluted cities when NO₂ levels were compared. This list saw Shanghai at the top with an average annual exposure of 41 ug/m³. Average NO₂ levels for Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, according to the report, ranged from 20-30 ug/m³.

NO₂ comes mainly from the burning of fuels in older vehicles, power plants, industrial facilities and residential cooking and heating.

As city residents tend to live closer to busy roads with dense traffic, they are often exposed to higher NO₂ pollu-



Gasping for air: Motorist and pedestrian travelling amid heavy smog conditions in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

tion than residents of rural areas.

In 2019, 86% of the more than 7,000 cities analysed in the report exceeded the WHO's 10 ug/m³ guideline for NO₂, impacting about 2.6 billion people.

"While PM2.5 pollution tends to get more attention on known hotspots around the world, less data has been available for NO₂ at this global scale," the report notes.

expert on air pollution in India. Other cities with high NO₂ population levels included Moscow, Beijing, Paris, Istanbul and Seoul.

Due to their highly reactive nature, nitrogen oxides also contributed to the formation of other pollutants, including ozone and particulate matter. NO₂ also has a shorter lifetime compared with PM2.5 and other air pollutants. As a result, NO₂ levels show very high variability in space and time – levels can vary significantly even across a few kilometres. In comparison, PM2.5 levels tend to show less spatial variation.

In 2019, the global average NO₂ exposure was 15.5 ug/m³, but exposure levels varied considerably across cities.

Ground monitoring of air quality remains limited in many regions of the world, the report adds, obscuring the true degree of NO₂ pollution in countries such as India.

MHA overrules Minister's tweet on providing flats to Rohingya

Denial comes after Puri announces shifting them to an apartment complex

SUHASINI HAIDAR

VIJAITA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Hours after Minister for Urban Development Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted that all Rohingya migrants from Myanmar living in a camp in Delhi will be shifted to flats, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a strong denial.

The Ministry also said that it had issued orders that the shanty town where the Rohingya were now living in be designated a "detention centre", pending the deportation of all of the hundreds of people living there.

In his tweet on Wednesday morning, Mr. Puri called the plans to move the Rohingya to an apartment complex built for economically weaker sections (EWS), a "landmark decision" by the Narendra Modi government.

"In a landmark decision, all Rohingya refugees will be shifted to EWS flats in Bakkarwala area of Delhi. They will be provided basic amenities, UNHCR (UN High Commission for Refugees) IDs & round-the-clock Delhi Police protection," Mr. Puri tweeted, adding that India had always welcomed refugees.

Stokes criticism

After a storm of criticism from groups such as the



Hardeep Singh Puri
@HardeepSPuri

7:32 AM · Aug. 17, 2022

India has always welcomed those who have sought refuge in the country. In a landmark decision all #Rohingya #Refugees will be shifted to EWS flats in Bakkarwala area of Delhi. They will be provided basic amenities, UNHCR IDs & round-the-clock @DelhiPolice protection.



गृहमंत्री कार्यालय, MHO India
@MHOIndia

2:50 PM · Aug. 17, 2022

With respect to news reports in certain sections of media regarding Rohingya illegal foreigners, it is clarified that Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has not given any directions to provide EWS flats to Rohingya illegal migrants at Bakkarwala in New Delhi.



Drawing the line: Children playing at the Rohingya settlement colony in Delhi's Kalindi Kunj on Wednesday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Home Ministry denied any such plan had been cleared by the Centre, and also blamed the Delhi government for the proposal to move the Rohingya "illegal foreigners", indicating it was not responsible for the decision.

In its response, the MHA

said it "has not given any directions to provide EWS flats to Rohingya at Bakkarwala in New Delhi". "The MHA has directed the government of Delhi to ensure that the Rohingya illegal foreigners will continue at the present location," referring to the shanty town in Delhi's Madanpur area where the Rohingya

currently reside, adding that the "MHA has already taken up the matter of deportation of illegal foreigners with the country concerned through the Ministry of External Affairs [MEA]."

The MEA declined to comment on the issue.

Mr. Puri later tweeted that the MHA's position was "correct", but didn't explain or delete his previous tweets making the announcement at the time of going to press.

Directive to Delhi govt.

The Home Ministry also said that it had directed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of Delhi to declare the Madanpur Rohingya area a "detention centre" immediately, which it has not done so far.

In response, AAP's local MLA and spokesperson Sauroabh Bharadwaj told *The Hindu* that declaring detention centres was the responsibility of the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), which is under the MHA. Adding to the confusion is the fact that the Rohingya camp is at present built on land donated by the Zakat Foundation of India, after a previous camp was destroyed in a fire.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGES 2 & 11

MHA overrules Minister's tweet

Earlier, addressing a press conference, Mr. Bharadwaj said he had accessed the file notings of a meeting conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs on August 2 that was attended by Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, FRRO officials and the Delhi Police. The note made it clear that the MHA wanted to bypass the elected government of Delhi and provide housing to illegal immigrants by keeping only the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) in the loop while taking the decision, he said.

“Why should we create detention centres for Rohingya at the expense of Delhi taxpayers? They should be deported [and] we have been saying that they are a

security threat,” Mr. Bharadwaj added.

Since the Rohingya live in temporary shelters made of bamboo and plastic sheets, it was also not clear how the open spaces will be designated as detention centres, and Rohingya movements restricted.

“Will they confine us to our rooms? Will they stop our education and stop us from making a living?” asked 20-year-old Miza, a Rohingya resident of the Madanpur Khada camp, who fled to India in 2012 due to ethnic violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. She added that India is now her home, and that she dreads returning to Myanmar.

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-drawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies

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

J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
K	Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies;
L	Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies;
M	Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
N	Salient features of the Representation of People's Act;
O	Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;
P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
Q	Issues relating to poverty and hunger,
R	Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes;
S	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources;
T	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health

General Studies Paper III

A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
D	Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting;
E	Land reforms in India
F	Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems;
G	Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints;
H	e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing.
I	Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping;
J	Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management;
K	Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices
L	Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology;
M	Indigenization of technology and developing new technology;
N	Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;
O	Issues relating to intellectual property rights
P	Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
Q	Disaster and disaster management
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;

T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.

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.