



VEDHIK

DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

26 - SEP - 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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Misc. An inventory of Armenian properties in City of Joy

Dasara back in full-on glory in the city of palaces

In a first, President Droupadi Murmu will launch the 10-day celebrations, the State festival of Karnataka, in Mysuru today

R. Krishna Kumar
MYSURU

The city of palaces is decked up as Mysuru's marquee 10-day event, Dasara, is set to unfold on Monday.

Held only as a symbolic celebration devoid of any fanfare amid COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, Dasara is set to be bigger, brighter and grander this year and will be inaugurated for the first time ever by President Droupadi Murmu.

Officially designated a State festival [*Naada Habba*] and entailing government funding, Dasara is a fulcrum to revive the tourism sector, a major economic driver of the region.



Grand gala: The Mysuru Palace will take centre stage for the next 10 days during the Dasara celebrations. The festival is set to be bigger, brighter and grander this year. M.A. SRIRAM

Tourism alone generates nearly 80,000 direct jobs in Mysuru and its surrounding regions, but the

sector faced hard times for the past two years owing to the pandemic.

In Mysuru, Dasara

marks the slaying of demon Mahishasura by Goddess Chamundeshwari and symbolises the triumph of

good over evil. But its religious underpinnings apart, the festival has also emerged as a platform to showcase the cultural diversity of the State.

290 events

A total of 290 cultural events are to be held over 10 days across eight venues in Mysuru.

The grand finale will be the famed procession or the Jamboo Savari of caparisoned elephants carrying the golden howdah on October 5, which will be followed by a torchlight parade. Dasara in Mysuru is a legacy of the Vijayanagar emperors who ruled between the 14th and 17th centuries.

India Inc. needs a neurodiverse workplace

In the last few years, words such as “inclusion” and “diversity” have assumed importance in the vocabulary of most organisations. A 2019 McKinsey study revealed that companies with gender diversity were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability while those with ethnic diversity out-rival their competitors by 36%. Another report titled ‘India’s Best Workplaces in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion 2021’ states that diverse teams perform better, boost leadership integrity, heighten trust in the organisation’s management and multiply revenue growth. It is no wonder then that organisations are building a more inclusive workforce by hiring employees from different ethnic groups, across gender and social backgrounds. Yet, lacking in this exercise is the absence of workers suffering from neurodiversity.

What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity in the workplace refers to including people with neurodivergent conditions such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and Asperger’s Syndrome. Harvard Health Publishing defines neurodiversity as a notion that every person interacts and experiences their surroundings differently; there is no right way of thinking, learning, or/and behaving. These differences should not be construed as defects or disorders.

It is, therefore, unjust that even with all the necessary skill sets and degrees, these persons are denied a job because they may react to situations differently from non-neurodiverse persons. While part of the problem could be lack of awareness about neurodivergent conditions, it is time organisations created a more accommodating environment.

According to a recent report, nearly 2 million people in India suffer from this neurological and developmental disorder and are therefore identified as autistic.



Yeshasvini Ramaswamy

is CEO, Great Place to Work

Another study by Deloitte estimates that nearly 20% of the world is neurodiverse. In the U.S., it is estimated that 85% of people on the autism spectrum are unemployed compared with 4.2% of the overall population. Hence, there is an urgency to create a work environment that welcomes neurodiverse individuals.

More efficient and creative

Organisations embracing neurodiversity enjoy a competitive edge in several areas such as efficiency, creativity, and culture. A study by JPMorgan Chase shows that professionals in its ‘Autism at Work’ initiative made fewer errors and were 90% to 140% more productive than neurotypical employees. Moreover, studies have shown that teams with both neurodivergent and neurotypical members are far more efficient than teams that comprise neurotypical employees alone. Neurodivergent individuals possess excellent attention to detail and an uncanny ability to focus on complex and repetitive tasks over a more extended period than their neurotypical peers. A study by the University of Montreal found that in a test involving completing a visual pattern, people on the autism spectrum could finish their task 40% faster than those who were not on the spectrum.

Additionally, people with dyslexia have more robust spatial reasoning – they can think about objects in three dimensions and

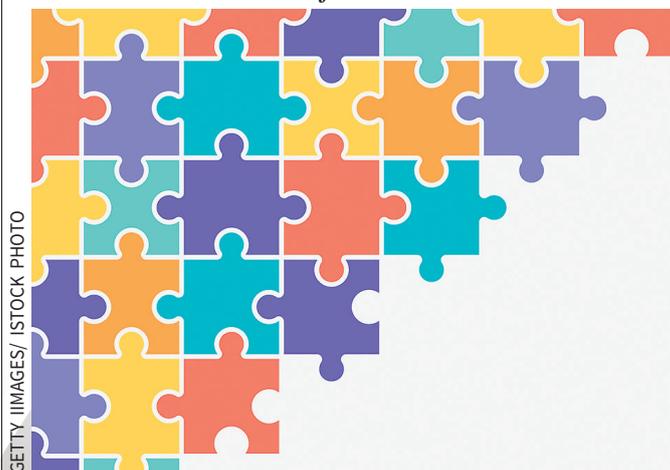
analyse such objects even with limited information. They have problem-solving capabilities which allow them to see multiple solutions to a problem. They are often out-of-the-box thinkers with average or above-average intelligence.

Companies such as Deloitte, Microsoft, SAP, JPMorgan Chase, and E&Y have introduced neurodiversity hiring programmes. Indian-origin companies Hatti Kaapi and Lemon Tree Hotels have also included a neurodiverse workforce. Human resources and leadership teams must work together to ensure that the workplace is cooperative towards neurodiverse individuals. The process of building an inclusive culture includes customising interviews, ensuring day-to-day assistance for these specially abled individuals, and providing proper infrastructure so that they can perform at their optimal levels. Thus, organisations must not only remove barriers that obstruct the progress of such individuals but also create conducive conditions for them to achieve their true potential.

Mentorship programmes can benefit some, while others might require professional training on shared social and communication skills. Many employees with neurodiversity may find the hustle and bustle of a traditional office disturbing. Therefore, neurodivergent friendly offices catering to the employees’ diverse sensory responses can help ensure that these employees are comfortable in office spaces.

However, creating the right environment is an ever-evolving exercise that requires openness and a will to change on the employer’s part. This flexibility can result in exceptional benefits with minimal or no additional costs. To ensure higher profitability and be respected as a responsible employer globally, companies need to widen their definition of inclusivity by providing higher participation of a neurodiverse workforce.

Organisations embracing neurodiversity enjoy a competitive edge in areas such as efficiency, creativity, and culture



GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK PHOTO

A ground plan for India's reformed multilateralism

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to the United States (September 18-28) has set the stage for an expansive range of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy by India. It is a unique visit as it seeks to achieve a vast list of objectives led by the Indian delegation's participation in the High-Level Week at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which opened on September 13.

Perhaps the only precedent to the Minister's current 11-day whirlwind diplomacy is his 2019 visit to the General Assembly, followed by a policy outreach comprising seven think-tanks in seven days in Washington DC. Even so, this year's diplomatic agendas and international setting separate it from earlier years in quite a few ways. Coming just after the recently concluded Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meet in Samarkand, which was attended by the Prime Minister, India's varied multilateral engagements showcase a road map for India's renewed multilateral diplomacy.

Overhauling the Security Council

At the heart of India's participation in the 77th General Assembly is the call for a 'reformed multilateralism' through which the United Nations Security Council should reform itself into a more inclusive organisation representing the contemporary realities of today. India's call for this structural overhaul of global multilateral institutions incorporates institutional accountability and a wider representation of the developing countries.

For a global organisation such as the UN, growing stakes of developing countries in the Security Council could foster trust and leadership across the world. The theme of the 77th General Assembly, which seeks "A watershed moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges", places India right in the midst as a strong partner of the UN.

At least three recent global developments reflective of the UN's functional evaluation have stood out in India's quest for a reform of the UN. The COVID-19 pandemic was a weak moment for UN's multilateralism. It highlighted the UN's institutional limitations when countries closed



Harsh V. Pant

is Vice-President for Studies at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and Professor at King's College London

New Delhi's call for a structural overhaul of global multilateral institutions incorporates institutional accountability and a wider representation of the developing countries

their borders, supply chains were interrupted and almost every country was in need of vaccines. Countries of the global South, including India, which stepped up through relief efforts, drug distribution and vaccine manufacturing, have created space for a more inclusive UN, particularly through its Security Council (UNSC) reform.

The UN's faultlines

Second, UN-led multilateralism has been unable to provide strong mechanisms to prevent wars. The shadow of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has loomed large over several deadlocks in UNSC resolutions since the war broke out in February this year. With the West boycotting Russia, the veto provision of the UNSC is expected to reach an even more redundant level than in the past. As such, a reformed multilateralism with greater representation could generate deeper regional stakes to prevent wars.

Finally, China's rise, belligerence and aggression which has been on display through its actions in the South China Sea, the Indo-Pacific region, and now increasingly globally, have also underscored the limitations of the UN-style multilateralism. China's growing dominance could lead it to carve its own multilateral matrix circumventing the West, economically and strategically. The international isolation of Russia and Iran as well as increasing the United States' Taiwan-related steps could usher in these changes more rapidly than expected.

China's control of multilateral organisations, including the UN, is only increasing – most recently seen in the unofficial pressure China exerted on the former UN's human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, to stop the release of a report by the UN Human Rights Council on the condition of Uyghurs in China. Moreover, China's unabashed use of veto power against India continues at the UN.

In the most recent case, it blocked a joint India-U.S. proposal at the UN to enlist Sajid Mir, a top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative involved in directing the 2008 Mumbai attacks, as a 'global terrorist'.

Consistent with the changing times, India's call for reform of the UNSC has grown in the past few

years. In this regard, Mr. Jaishankar's hosting of a ministerial meeting of the G4 (Brazil, India, Germany and Japan) holds special significance. Another high-level meeting of the Indian delegation with the L.69 Group, on "Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Achieving Comprehensive Reform of the UN Security Council", will be critical in the planning of the next steps. The L.69 group's vast membership spread over Asia, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean and Small Island Developing States could bring about a wider global consensus on the issue of the UNSC reforms.

In focus

India's emphasis on reinvigorated multilateralism coincides with a critical juncture in the UN-led multilateralism. Just as burden-sharing has become integral to evolving multilateralism between regional countries, the UN could integrate such practices within its institutional ambit. In the past few years, the UN's responses to both global and regional events have evinced a clear space for leadership and representation, as much as they have depicted its institutional inability to lead globally on its own. With starker divisions between countries as result of the Russia-Ukraine war and lingering pandemic-induced restrictions, the need for the UN's reform is likely to be felt more palpably than ever before.

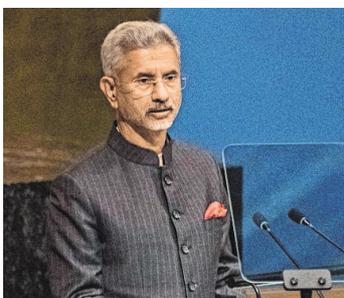
Beyond the UN, the Minister's participation in plurilateral meetings of the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, the U.S.), IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Presidency Pro Tempore CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), India-CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and other trilateral formats, such as India-France-Australia, India-France-the United Arab Emirates and India-Indonesia-Australia underlines India's search for new frameworks of global governance, amidst growing frustration with the extant multilateral order. As Mr. Jaishankar has rightly highlighted in his remarks at the UN, at a challenging time for the world order, New Delhi continues to affirm its commitment to "diplomacy and the need for international cooperation".

Very premature to comment on India getting UNSC veto: Jaishankar

Sriram Lakshman
UNITED NATIONS

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who concluded a week-long visit to the United Nations, said it would be premature to comment on the positions countries, including India, are taking on the issue of whether any permanent membership for India to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) came with veto power. The Minister was speaking to the Indian press at a briefing on Saturday afternoon.

“So I think it’d be very premature to comment either on our own positions or other people’s positions at this stage,” the Minister said, adding that



S. Jaishankar

at this stage, the emphasis was on ensuring that there was some tangible basis to the negotiations.

Campaigning hard

India has been campaigning hard for a permanent seat on the Council and currently all five permanent members (the P-5) have veto rights. While a number of countries have shown support for India’s

membership, including the U.S. and Russia, the question remains open, if this comes with veto rights.

“...The starting point is the need to accept that there should be reform and then the need to develop some kind of practical path towards it,” Dr. Jaishankar said in response to questions from *The Hindu* on the linkages between permanent membership and the veto. At this stage the positions were not fixed and countries’ ideas would go into a “melting pot” before something emerges, the Minister said.

“It’s incredible that after so many years, there’s actually no text. So how does the negotiation advance if there is no text and no pro-

gress and no stock-taking?” he said, adding that India was advocating for text-based negotiations right now, to ensure that the intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) process – the principal framework via which UNSC reform is deliberated – was “serious”.

‘Shift in mood’

“I think there’s a growing appreciation of the need for that,” Dr. Jaishankar said. He alluded to references others had made on Security Council reform in their remarks during the week, saying he sensed a shift in the mood on the long-standing issue that is raised every year and that others had told him they had sensed a shift too.

Rohatgi declines Centre's offer to be Attorney-General

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi on Sunday confirmed to *The Hindu* that he had declined the offer from the Union government to be the next Attorney-General (A-G) of India.

The development comes as a setback for the Narendra Modi government as the incumbent, K.K. Venugopal, is set to retire on September 30.

Last week, there were reports that Mr. Rohatgi would take over as the government's top law officer

Mr. Rohatgi resigned in 2017 after serving for three years. After that Mr. Venugopal was appointed

from October 1. However, Mr. Rohatgi said he had declined the offer but cited no reasons. Mr. Rohatgi had resigned in June 2017 after serving for three years. After that Mr. Venugopal was appointed A-G for a term of three years. He was given one-year extensions in 2020 and 2021 at his requests.

Mid-day meal-related food poisoning cases at six-year peak

CAG audits blame poor infrastructure, insufficient inspections, irregular licensing and limited reporting

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan
Rebecca Rose Varghese

With most students back in school after pandemic restrictions were eased, cases of food poisoning due to the consumption of mid-day meals have resurfaced. In the last 90 days, close to 120 students suffered from food poisoning across schools in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

In 2022, 979 victims of food poisoning were reported in schools across India, the highest in the last six years. The number declined during the pandemic years as schools were closed. Chart 1 shows the number of food poisoning cases due to the consumption of mid-day meals at schools between 2009 and 2022 (till September 14).

In the last 13 years, data suggest that at least 9,646 such cases of food poisoning were reported. This figure is a conservative estimate based on data from the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme and news reports. Close to 12% of such victims became ill after consuming mid-day meals in which lizards, rats, snakes and cockroaches were found. Chart 2 shows the number of such victims between 2009 and 2022. Most such cases were recorded in Karnataka (1,524), Odisha (1,327), Telangana (1,092), Bihar (950) and Andhra Pradesh (794). Map 3 shows the State-wise split.

In 2016, 247 students fell ill after eating khichdi as their mid-day meal at a Zila Parishad school in a village in Palghar district, Maharashtra. Map 4 shows 232 such incidents of food poisoning due to consumption of mid-day meals in schools between 2009 and 2022.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has audited several States in the past decade and has cited many reasons that could lead to low standards of mid-day meal preparation such as poor infrastructure, insufficient inspections,

irregular licensing, limited reporting and absence of feedback mechanisms.

In 2019, in Madhya Pradesh, the CAG found that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India did not notify doctors to report food poisoning cases. The Food Safety Commissioner did not have information relating to food poisoning cases that occurred during the 2014-19 period. The CAG found that one such missed instance involved 110 food poisoning cases that occurred in August 2014, in a school in Hoshangabad district. As data were not collected, action was not taken against Food Business Operators (FBOs) responsible for preparing the meal.

In 2015-16, in Madhya Pradesh, the CAG found that around 14,500 schools did not have a kitchen shed for preparing mid-day meals. In 2016, in Arunachal Pradesh, 40% of the schools did not have a shed. In Chhattisgarh, a CAG survey between FY11 and FY15 found that the mid-day meal was cooked in open areas in unhygienic conditions in 8,932 schools.

Food delivered from centralised kitchens to schools should have a minimum temperature of 65°C when it is served. In 2018, during a field visit of schools in Valsad district in Gujarat, the CAG observed that the food served by the NGOs was not hot and none of the schools the CAG had visited had the facility to check temperature. In five districts of the State, the CAG also found that there was over 80% shortfall in inspections of schools carried out by Deputy Collectors due to shortage of staff.

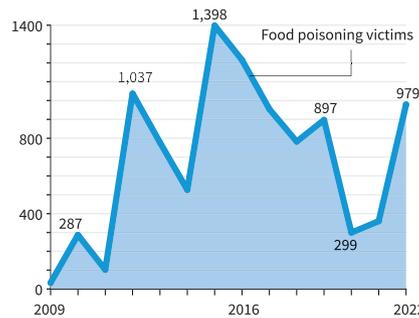
In 2014, in Jharkhand, the CAG found that a grievance redressal mechanism was absent in many schools and so, reports about children falling sick were not addressed and rectified.

In 2017, in Himachal Pradesh, the CAG found that license and registration certificates were given to 97% and 100% of FBOs, respectively, without inspecting their premises.

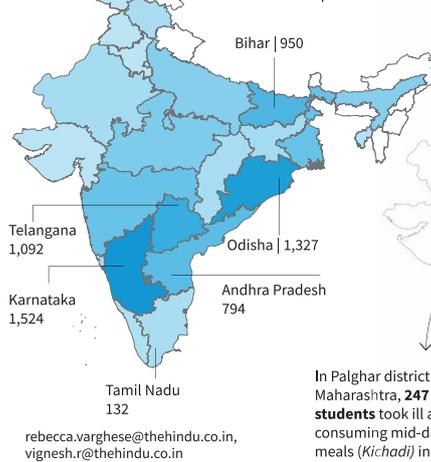
When food turns poison

The charts and maps show the number of people who suffered from food poisoning after consuming mid-day meals in schools across India in the 2009-2022 period. The data were collated from the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and news reports by Arun (tweets as @amasaesle). This is a conservative estimate as the IDSP reports information on outbreaks and not individual cases. Also, only English language news reports were considered

Chart 1 | The chart shows the number of cases of food poisoning due to the consumption of mid-day meals in schools between 2009 and 2022 (till September 14)



Map 3 | The map shows the State-wise split of the victims in the 2009-2022 period



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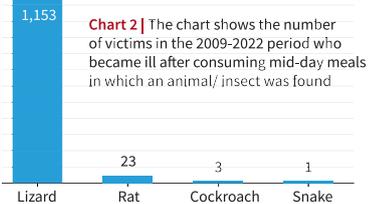
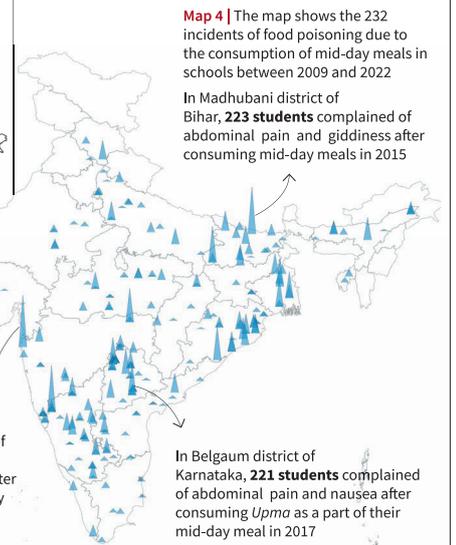


Chart 2 | The chart shows the number of victims in the 2009-2022 period who became ill after consuming mid-day meals in which an animal/ insect was found



Map 4 | The map shows the 232 incidents of food poisoning due to the consumption of mid-day meals in schools between 2009 and 2022

In Madhubani district of Bihar, **223 students** complained of abdominal pain and giddiness after consuming mid-day meals in 2015

In Palghar district of Maharashtra, **247 students** took ill after consuming mid-day meals (*Khichadi*) in February 2016

In Belgaum district of Karnataka, **221 students** complained of abdominal pain and nausea after consuming *Upma* as a part of their mid-day meal in 2017

'Non-oil exports to UAE up 14% after trade deal; surge 3% globally'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

India's non-oil exports to the UAE have grown 14% between June and August, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said on Sunday, attributing the uptick to the bilateral deal between the two nations that came into effect this May.

India's global non-petroleum exports during the same period grew by just 3% on a year-on-year basis, the Ministry said, seeking to emphasise the much higher growth in such exports to the UAE which were at \$5.92 billion compared to \$5.17 billion a year ago. "Excluding petroleum-related imports, the imports from the UAE in the three months grew by 1% to \$5.61 billion," the Ministry noted.

"...Import increase in oil/petroleum products is largely on account of the rise in global prices and to a certain extent on an increase offtake in volumes. Further, it is pertinent to mention that bulk of the oil



Import increase in oil products is largely on account of the rise in global prices and increase in volumes

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

imports from the UAE are of Crude Petroleum, the demand for which is inelastic and the customs duty for which is very low," it explained. The sharpest jump in Indian exports to UAE was seen in sugar (up 237%), cereals (161%), vegetables (82%), inorganic chemicals (74%) and electrical machinery and equipment (67%).

The Ministry said it expects Indian exports to increase further in the coming months with increasing use of the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by exporters and a series of trade promotion events planned in the UAE.

Labour cost edge may dissipate due to tech shifts: NITI adviser

Vikas Dhoot

NEW DELHI

The advent of technologies such as 3D printing and robotics could significantly alter countries' competitive advantages in global trade flows, and spell the end of factors like cheaper labour costs that usually benefit several developing countries, a top policymaker said on Sunday.

“With a technology like 3D printing, you can design in one country and print in another and the trade transaction can happen digitally,” said Badri Narayan Gopalakrishnan, NITI Aayog lead adviser and head of trade and commerce.

While technologies like AI, robotics and block-

chain are leading to a significant realignment in production processes and consumption patterns, he said their adoption will also lead to changes in comparative advantages.

“We may have different countries that will be leading for different products, commodities, and comparative advantages may change. For example, developing countries that traditionally have a labour cost advantage... if the production processes change and you can do things without using labour with automation and technologies,” he said.

He spoke on the impact of ‘Digitisation on Foreign Trade’ hosted by NITI Aayog and Trade Promotion Council of India.

Chandigarh plans to accelerate adoption of electric vehicles

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh's Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, 2022 seeks to reduce the use of fossil fuels, which contribute substantially to the rising particulate air pollution in the Union Territory.

As a "model EV city", Chandigarh aims to have one of the highest penetrations of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) among all Indian cities by the end of the policy period of five years.

Approved by Chandigarh Administrator Banwarilal Purohit, the policy, which came into effect earlier this week, addresses the slow uptake of EVs and the changing policy, technology, and market landscapes of the sector.

The policy prioritises public and shared transport, goods carriers, and two-wheelers to accelerate the adoption of EVs.

Dharam Pal, adviser to the administrator, said the policy incentivises the adoption of vehicle categories such as e-bicycles, e-2 wheelers, and personal and commercial e-four wheelers, over and above FAME-II policy incentives provided by the Government of India. With an eye

New policy envisages that EVs will contribute 70% of vehicle registrations by the end of 2027

on adopting zero-emission mobility for achieving carbon neutrality in Chandigarh by 2030, the policy envisages that EVs will contribute 70% of new vehicle registrations by the end of the policy period.

While the adoption of EVs can aid better air quality, experts have voiced environmental concerns.

"Electric vehicle has long-term dangers. The lithium ion batteries used in EVs could be dangerous. Lithium as such is a very reactive material and if this enters our food chain, it could have devastating health consequences," Jantinderpal Kundra of the Chandigarh-based environment work group Climategiri and the NGO Save Environment Society said.



Watch our video

Are Electric Vehicles India's future?

bit.ly/3CbBpSl

Over the top

The Govt. must upgrade its thinking on privacy before digital apps control

The draft telecommunication Bill, put out last week for public comments, hints at a disturbing governmental pursuit, for more control over a range of digital applications and over-the-top streaming services that millions of Indians use daily. It seeks to do this by bringing them under the ambit of telecommunication services, the operation of which would require a licence – that is if the draft provisions do go through. This means the likes of WhatsApp, Zoom, and Netflix will be considered telecommunication services. And so would a whole range of digital services that are anyway regulated by the IT Act. This, the Government wants to do, by a wide expansion of the definition of what constitutes a telecom service. The new definition includes everything from broadcasting services to electronic mail, from voice mail to voice, video and data communication services, from Internet and broadband services to over-the-top communication services, including those that the Government may notify separately.

It is all well to state, as the Government has done, that the country requires a new legal framework, and not the existing one that is based on the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, to deal with the realities of the 21st century. But, it is not just technology that has evolved in over a century but also a democratic society's understanding and expectations of user rights, privacy and transparency. Not long ago, the highest court in the country acknowledged a citizen's right to privacy as a fundamental right. This draft, however, disappoints on the above counts. According to it, for instance, the Government has the powers to prevent a message from being transmitted "on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of the public safety". Another clause in the draft Bill requires an entity that has been granted a licence to "unequivocally identify the person to whom it provides services". A similar clause under the IT rules brought in last year – requiring messaging apps to "enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource" – has been challenged in the Court. There are enough valid reasons to doubt whether this is even technically possible without breaking encryption and making all communications vulnerable. While this is not to underplay the mounting challenges for ensuring security, the repeated attempts by the Government to be able to tap into all kinds of communication, without making sure the common man has a legal armour in the form of a data protection law, is extremely problematic. The Government needs to upgrade its thinking on users and privacy. This draft needs to go back to the drawing board.

Fighter jet strength depleting, IAF expedites Su-30 fleet modernisation

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Having taken delivery of all Su-30MKI fighter aircraft and the deal for contracting 12 more Su-30s meant to replace those lost over the years deferred against the backdrop of the Ukraine war, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is working to speed up the long-delayed upgrade of these frontline fighters. “The Air Service Quality Requirements for the first upgrade are being finalised,” a defence official said. “We are trying to do as much of the upgrade



Mid-air refueling of an Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft.

as possible within the country,” the official stated.

The upgrade process is as much as procuring an aircraft, the official said while explaining that the upgrade is a complex exer-

cise and is being planned in phases. During the early stage of the deliberations, which have been going on for several years now, the Russian side had pitched for the entire upgrade to be done in Russia, but given the long timelines, India was inclined to do it in phases with a major part of it in the country. The Make in India effort and the war in Ukraine have accelerated that effort.

Effort is on to do basic mission capabilities, fly by wire and flight controls within the country, the official stated. The IAF is look-

ing to add new weapons, avionics and sensors and engines on the Su-30MKIs to keep them contemporary for the next few decades. India had procured 272 Su-30s from Russia, a majority of which were assembled by HAL and around 11 jets were lost. The IAF has 12 Su-30 squadrons in service, and 40-50 aircraft are at HAL for overhaul repairs, officials said.

Read our explainer

The dwindling fighter strength of the IAF

bit.ly/3LG9ugc

Violent front

The PFI invokes the Constitution and engages in violence at the same time

On September 22, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested over 100 leaders and activists of the radical Islamist outfit, the Popular Front of India (PFI), after raids in 15 States. The PFI claims to be a 'neo-social movement', but its rhetoric and activities have left little doubt about its true nature. The latest demonstration of its violent, and threatening, character was seen the next day after the raids, when it called for a *hartal*. The PFI continuously invokes the Constitution, democratic values and rule of law, but all that cannot camouflage the violence in its action and speech as unleashed in Kerala last week. Kerala is its cradle and launch pad. Extremely provocative slogans and speeches formed part of the protest. The PFI and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) which acts as its political front, often deny their association, as unconvincingly as their claims of being on the right side of the law and democracy. The NIA has accused the PFI and its affiliates of conspiring to foment hostility between different religions and groups, thereby disrupting public tranquillity and causing disaffection against India. The agency, which has so far registered 19 PFI-related cases, charge-sheeted 355 people and secured the conviction of 46, has charged them with propagating an alternative justice delivery system justifying violence, instigating vulnerable youth to join banned terror outfits such as al-Qaeda and conspiring to establish Islamic rule in India.

During these searches on the outfit and its members, the NIA claims to have seized a hit list of prominent leaders of a particular community. Going by the claims of the enforcement agencies, the outfit has been continuously indulging in unlawful activities, ever since the Narath arms training case of 2013 in which members of the PFI and SDPI were convicted for organising a terrorist camp with the intent to train youth in explosives and weapons use. In 2020, some PFI members were arrested for their alleged role in inciting people during the Delhi riots. The outfit also faces the charge of raising money domestically and overseas to fund its operations, thus attracting money laundering investigations by the Enforcement Directorate. As it turns out, the rise of the PFI-SDPI axis is being resisted by moderate Muslim organisations. These outfits are profiting from the sense of insecurity among Muslims caused by Hindutva aggression and allied Government measures that seem prejudiced and fuelled by majoritarian politics. The state must act against radicalism of all kinds, rather than being selective in its approach to communal hate.

An inventory of Armenian properties in City of Joy

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

When Kolkata was coming up in the 1690s, the Armenians arrived in the city. The community, whose strength in the City of Joy has dropped to 150 individuals at present, had once flourished in business and built several key properties. In the 330 years since the first Armenians set foot there, they had given several properties in the heart of the city to rent or lease for a nominal amount.

Earlier this month, the Office of the Administrator General and Official Trustee of West Bengal received a letter from Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. The letter was to express appreciation to Biplab Roy, judge who heads the office of the Official Trustee for better financial management of Armenian properties in the city.

“We are pleased to learn from Very Rev. Fr. Dajad Tsaturyan, Pastor of the

Armenians in India and manager of Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy, about your devoted hard work in preserving the rich legacy and heritage of the Armenians in Kolkata,” said the letter dated September 5 and signed by Karekin II.

Mr. Roy said the annual income from 40 properties belonging to the Armenian institutions have increased from ₹36.55 lakh to over ₹2 crore after the lease agreements were changed.

“For instance, a property on 44 Chowringhee Road spread over 60 cottahs [one cottah is equal to 720 sq.ft.] of land was leased for 99 years where the yearly rent was about ₹1 lakh. Those occupying the property on lease were violating some terms and then after discussion, the new rent was decided as ₹60 lakh a year. Also, the company agreed to ₹3.6 crore as security deposit,” Mr. Roy explained. The Office of the Administrator General also took possession



Past connection: The Armenian Church is among the iconic properties in Kolkata. DEBASISH BHADURI

of four cottahs of land of the Armenian Church at Barabazar valued at ₹10 crore located on 1 Synagogue Street, Kolkata which was illegally handed over to some people. Mr. Roy also added that his office was taking steps to recover many prime properties of the Church in Kolkata, Hooghly and Asansol.

In his letter, Karekin II says, “Please accept our words of appreciation for the unwavering support shown for the benefit of Ar-

menian College and Philanthropic Academy and the Armenian Churches in West Bengal. It is also greatly pleasing to know that with your kind cooperation the Armenian College is operating successfully, providing excellent education to our Armenian children.”

The Religious Head of Armenia in the communication wished that Mr. Roy continued in his official position for the benefit and safeguard of various trusts of Armenians in Kolkata.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Roy who is a judicial officer of the rank of District Judge, said, “The appreciation from Armenia is not only an honour to the Office of Administrator General and Official Trustee of Kolkata but also to the very city of Kolkata which has tried to restore the legacy of all the communities that have contributed to its composition nature. We are trying to restore and ensure that the properties belonging to the Armenians, Jews and even Anglo-Indians are properly maintained and they generate resources that can contribute to the well-being of the community”. The State government also draws a commission from the money generated by these properties.

Sunil Sobti, warden of Armenian Church of Kolkata, said that what Mr. Roy and his office have done was remarkable and something nobody had done in the past several years.

Mr. Sobti added many

iconic buildings including the 300-year-old Armenian Holy Church of Nazareth and the Kolkata's Grand Hotel were built by the members of the community. There is an Armenian Street, and the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy was formally set up in 1821 at 358 Old China Bazar Street.

The first Act relating to the Administrator General of Bengal was passed in 1874, which was then amended in 1913. There was also an Official Trustee Act, which was in effect from the 1870s and in 1916, the office of the Administrator General and Official Trustee were merged and the office of the Administrator General and Official Trustee came into being and has continued to function since then. Recently a treasure trove of artefacts about Kolkata's colonial past were discovered from an old warehouse of the Office of Administrator General.

General Studies Paper I	
A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies
General Studies Paper II	
A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

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

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