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DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" would help students, especially beginners save time and streamline their preparations with regard to Current Affairs. A content page and an Appendix has been added segregating and mapping the content to the syllabus.

It is an appreciable efforts by Vedhik IAS Academy helping aspirants of UPSC Civil Services Examinations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Babu Sebastian, former VC - MG University in extending all support to this endeavour. Finally I also extend my thanks to thank Ms. Shilpa Sasidharan and Mr. Shahul Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

We welcome your valuable comments so that further improvement may be made in the forthcoming material. We look forward to feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve and add value for students. Every care has been taken to avoid typing errors and if any reader comes across any such error, the authors shall feel obliged if they are informed at their Email ID.

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A nation achieves glory when it takes pride in its heritage, says PM in Ujjain

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the first phase of the ₹856-crore Mahakal Lok corridor in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain on Tuesday, after offering prayers at the ancient Mahakaleshwar temple.

Hailing his government's efforts at renovating and reviving several Hindu temples across the country as well as improving access to Sikh pilgrimage sites, Mr. Modi said that in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (75th anniversary of Independence) period, India had given a "call for freedom from the mentality of slavery and taking pride in its heritage".

"The nation finds glory only when the flag of its success is flying on the world stage. To reach the pinnacle of that success, it is necessary that the nation attains cultural excellence and takes pride in its identity," Mr. Modi said, mentioning projects such as the Kashi Vishwanath corridor,



In devotion: Narendra Modi praying at the Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain on Tuesday before inaugurating the first phase of the Mahakal Lok corridor development project. PTI

the Ram temple construction in Ayodhya and initiatives such as opening of the Kartarpur Sahib corridor.

'Centre of India's soul'

Addressing a gathering at the Kartik Mela Ground, he said such efforts were helping India re-establish the pride associated with these centres of its "spiritual consciousness", while calling the city of Ujjain

"centre of India's soul".

Earlier, he unveiled a *shivling* to dedicate the Mahakal corridor to the nation. Mr. Modi praised Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for the successful launch of the project. The first phase of the corridor cost ₹351 crore.

The corridor that is a little over 900 metres long traverses the old Rudrasa-

gar lake, which has been revived as part of the redevelopment project around the Mahakaleshwar Temple, one of the 12 'jyotirlingas'. The corridor is dotted with 108 ornate sandstone columns in a row with *trishul* design on top and *mudras* of Lord Shiva. It also has fountains surrounded by sculptures and murals on the deity. (With PTI inputs)

Reading the Chinese tea leaves

The Communist Party of China (CPC)'s 20th national congress is scheduled to begin in Beijing on October 16. Held every five years, this week-long political event has some crucial tasks including reshuffling personnel, amending the party constitution and announcing future policy. The party general secretary will present a comprehensive political report. However, this edition marks a significant departure in China's political landscape, especially in elite politics.

Seeking absolute power

Xi Jinping is galloping towards a third term. Though the party charter is silent on the term limits for the general secretary, the state constitutional amendment in 2018 scrapped the two-term limit of the state presidency. Extending the presidential term limit will lead to alignment of government and party posts. As per the 1982 state constitution, the party and state positions were held by different people. Only in 1993 did the two apex positions begin to be held by a single individual. Jiang Zemin, who was appointed party general secretary in 1989 during the Tiananmen Square crisis, and was again elected to the 14th CCP National Congress in 1992, served as party general secretary until 2002 and as state president from 1993 to 2003. Hu Jintao occupied the same positions for two terms. However, Mr. Xi's goal for a third term looks certain. The much-touted retirement age cap of 68 will not impact his prospects. Mr. Xi is 69, but being the 'hexin' or 'core' of the party Central Committee makes him the 'yibashou' or the 'first hand', which signifies his absolute power.

In China, the state president is usually referred to as 'guojia zhuxi' or state chairman, so it would not be a surprise if Mr. Xi takes a similar position in the party, as Mao Zedong and Hua Guofeng did. The post of the party chairman will put Mr. Xi above the Central Committee's apex leadership



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Apparatchiks are not shying away from strengthening party control over every state function

body, the Politburo Standing Committee. This absolute power of the 'guojia zhuxi' can be observed in the selection of Congress delegates. Unlike previous congress sessions, this time, the central organs of the party and the state personnel delegate list are merged. Likewise, the People's Liberation Army and the Armed Police delegates are clubbed together. Besides, front-line workers who won honorary titles in 'Xi's new era' in the corps or provinces have also been elected delegates. On the other hand, Mr. Xi's protégé, Ying Yong, the former Hubei party secretary and a Central Committee member, who was appointed as deputy prosecutor general at the Supreme People's Procuratorate in August, did not figure in the list of congress delegates. Mr. Ying will likely be promoted to the head of a national leadership position in March next year.

Mr. Xi's third term will reinforce his position as the new centre of the factional power base. Already maintaining a robust patron-client relationship with his protégés from Zhejiang, Fujian and Shanghai, Mr. Xi is also building a coalition, especially with the Communist Youth League group, in which Hu Jintao, Premier Li Keqiang and Chair of the Chinese People Political Consultative Conference National Committee, Wang Yang, are some prominent leaders. Hu Haifeng, son of Hu Jintao, has been elected to his first party congress from Zhejiang.

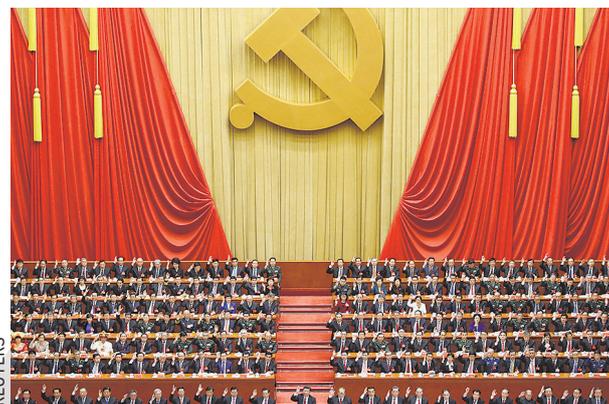
Former Premier Li Peng's son Li Xiaopeng is transport minister and Central Committee member. This trend indicates that Mr. Xi is co-opting princelings, even from rival factions, to have more elbow room in 'winner takes all' politics.

At the Seventh Plenum of the outgoing 19th Central Committee, members approved the policies and draft amendments to the CPC's constitution which will be formally unveiled at the congress. The Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, which was enshrined in the constitution in 2017, may likely be amended to Xi Jinping Thought. Likewise, amendments on deepening governance through the party's self-reform and improving its conduct vigorously would be other crucial agendas.

Implications for India

For India's China watchers, the upcoming party congress is crucial. Some 'honoured' delegates include 2020 Galwan valley veterans and others serving in military districts across the India-China border. Likewise, the other significant development is the fate of two former Chinese ambassadors who had served in Delhi. Le Yucheng, a Central Committee alternate member, has been shifted from the foreign ministry. Once a third ranking member in the Chinese foreign ministry, Mr. Le is not even a delegate this time. On the other hand, Mr. Le's successor, Luo Zhaohui, who heads China's foreign aid agency, is a delegate. Given Mr. Xi's stress on major country diplomacy, Mr. Luo will likely get a seat in the 20th Central Committee. Mr. Luo's experience in South Asia, especially with India during the 2017 Doklam crisis, has improved his chances.

Apparatchiks are not shying away from strengthening party control over every state function. Reading the Chinese tea leaves is necessary to understand how politics will be shaped by the national congress and vice versa.



G7 vows support for Ukraine after Russian forces launch mass strikes

Group promises support for Kyiv 'as long as it takes'; missile strikes kill one person in Zaporizhzhia and leaves part of Lviv without power; Belarus says its military exercise alongside Russian troops is to assess 'combat readiness'

Reuters
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky appealed to leaders of the Group of Seven nations on Tuesday for more air defence capabilities and the G7 vowed to support Kyiv for “as long as it takes” while warning Russia against any use of nuclear weapons.

The G7 – which groups the United States, Germany, France, Japan, Britain, Italy and Canada – pledged continued “financial, humanitarian, military, diplomatic and legal support... for as long as it takes” to Ukraine, it said in a statement.



Timely ties: Vladimir Putin, right, meeting UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in St. Petersburg on Tuesday. AP

NATO said it was closely monitoring Russia’s nuclear forces following a string of Russian battlefield defeats in Ukraine and that the allies were also boost-

ing security around key infrastructure after recent attacks on Baltic Sea gas pipelines.

Russian missiles again hit Ukrainian cities but

with less intensity than on Monday, when dozens of strikes killed 19 persons, wounded more than 100 and knocked out power supplies across the country.

More missile strikes killed at least one person in the southeastern Ukrainian town of Zaporizhzhia and left part of the western city of Lviv without power, local officials said.

“When Ukraine receives a sufficient quantity of modern and effective air defence systems, the key element of Russia’s terror, rocket strikes, will cease to work,” Mr. Zelensky told G7 leaders at a virtual meeting where he again ruled out peace talks with

Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Belarus, Moscow’s closest ally, said it had begun an exercise to assess its “combat readiness” after ordering troops on Monday to deploy with Russian forces near its border with Ukraine. Belarus allowed Russia to use its territory to invade Ukraine but has not sent its own troops across the border.

Mr. Zelensky denied Minsk’s claim that Ukraine planned to attack Belarus but told the G7 he wanted to make sure there was no threat from its northern neighbour, and he called for a mission of international observers to monitor the border area.



Extreme caution: A man wears a protective mask as he rides by new nucleic acid testing booths placed on the side of a road in Beijing, China. GETTY IMAGES

Real-estate debt, crackdowns and COVID policies throw a spanner in China's economy

Xi Jinping's push to make China a technological superpower faces growing headwinds from an economy weighed down by debt and a stringent zero-COVID regime. The latter especially has left the nation isolated from the rest of the world

Ananth Krishnan

There are only a few workers today manning the whirring conveyor belts at the "intelligent logistics park" of the \$100 billion Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com, which together with Alibaba dominates the world of Chinese online retail. If you receive a package in Beijing, chances are it passed through this massive sorting facility, where packages are arranged and indexed not by human workers but by robots.

JD's recently accelerating push towards automation presents a snapshot of the state of China's economy, as the country's leadership pushes forward with ambitious plans to move up the value chain and establish China as a tech superpower, while at the same time reeling from headwinds such as a rapidly ageing population and a "zero-COVID" regime that is continuing for a third straight year. It is the perils of the latter two challenges that is driving the current thinking at JD.

In March 2022, supply chains in Shanghai came to near-total collapse as the city went into a chaotic and brutal full lockdown. Residents had to rely on sparse government handouts of vegetables to survive – a jarring reality for the financial centre of the world's second-largest economy. "The lockdown in Shanghai was a good example of intensive pressure on supply chains", explains Liu Hui, who heads JD's in-house Consumption and Industry Development Research Institute. A crisis forced technological upgrades, as the company turned to big data – in which it is now investing millions – to decide how to funnel in supplies from its centres around the country into Shanghai. Meanwhile, workers in any Chinese factory are now only a moment's notice away from being shipped into quarantine because of the vagaries of the "zero-COVID" regime, which still mandates mass testing and centralised quarantine. That's a problem, JD's team notes wryly, that you don't have with robots.

End of its shelf-life

When Xi Jinping took over as General

China's growth trend

The chart shows China's annual GDP growth in the past decade. The nation's GDP growth had been on a downward trend and slipped to its lowest in 2020. In 2021, GDP grew by 8.1%, the highest in the past ten years



Secretary of the Communist Party in 2012, topmost of his economic priorities was dealing with an export-driven, state investment-addicted growth model that was nearing the end of its shelf-life – the model that had propelled China into becoming a lynchpin of global supply chains, the world's largest trading nation, and the second-largest economy. "President Xi came to the conclusion, by observing trends of economic development, that the country had entered a new normal and we couldn't continue to develop as per the past pattern," says Han Baojiang, Director of the Department of Economics, at the Communist Party's Central Party School.

The biggest immediate question mark over China's economic future is Mr. Xi's continuing zero-COVID policy

Mr. Xi has emphasised a three-pronged campaign: what he has called "common prosperity" to tackle inequality as well as more strictly regulate sectors such as property and private tech firms; a "dual circulation" model that boosts consumption and the domestic economy (or internal circulation) while recalibrating China's external relations (the other circulation); and most importantly, self-reliance in strategic industries. All three themes are expected to be given prominent attention at the

once-in-five-year Party Congress, which opens on October 16 and will mark the start of Mr. Xi's third term. The progress on all three fronts, as Mr. Xi completes a decade, is a mixed picture. The Chinese economy, as Mr. Han notes, has grown from 53.9 trillion Yuan (\$8.5 trillion) in 2012 to an impressive 114 trillion Yuan (\$15.9 trillion) at the end of 2021. He flags the party's declaration last year that it had ended extreme poverty, by lifting close to 100 million out of poverty in Mr. Xi's tenure through a targeted campaign, as one of his signature legacies.

Regulations and interventions

The other significant legacy is the return of the state, which has, however, left a once-thriving private sector battered and bruised. China's tech behemoths in particular, are licking their wounds after tighter regulation and investigations into alleged monopolistic practices targeting companies like Alibaba and Tencent wiped off close to \$1 trillion in market value. In the view of some in the party, tech giants had gotten too big for the party's comfort, particularly because of their amassing of data. Meanwhile, under the "common prosperity" campaign aimed at addressing social inequalities, a thriving private education industry was also kneecapped overnight.

Curbing what the party called "the disorderly expansion of capital" has been a focus for Mr. Xi, fuelling one regulatory

intervention after another. China's overleveraged property developers have seen the taps of easy loans switched off – a move that most economists in China would agree was long overdue, but one which has now plunged the real estate sector, a driving force for the Chinese economy, into a looming crisis. In many cities, homeowners have stopped paying mortgages as apartments lie unfinished. The real estate downturn will certainly weigh down on China's growth, which fell to just 0.4% in the second quarter, threatening not only the 5.5% annual target but Beijing's ascent to overtake the U.S. as the world's largest economy – a landmark that its officials have placed much emphasis on.

One of the key objectives in a blueprint for China's long-range objectives until 2035, released last year and pledging an annual 7% growth in R&D spending, is to establish China as a science and technology superpower. Self-sufficiency has been a key focus for Mr. Xi, who last year stressed the need to build "secure and reliable supply chains to safeguard China's industrial security and national security" and to "tighten international production chains' dependence on China". This would give China leverage should countries threaten to limit access to key technologies, as the U.S. has recently done with semiconductors.

The zero-COVID policy

The biggest immediate question mark over China's economic future, however, is Mr. Xi's continuing zero-COVID policy, which has left business sentiment at the lowest in decades. Youth unemployment reached 20% in July, coinciding with spreading campaigns among young urban Chinese to opt out of the rat race and "flat". Zero-COVID, which the Communist Party has pledged to continue, has also prompted countries to diversify their supply chain dependence on China, undercutting one of Mr. Xi's prime objectives. Just as Beijing is looking to raise its global stakes, it has left China isolated from the world.

This is the second article of a three-part series looking at China's changing politics, economy and diplomacy in the Xi decade.

Israel and Lebanon reach an agreement on maritime border

Agence France-Presse

JERUSALEM

Israel said on Tuesday it has reached a U.S.-brokered agreement with Lebanon to settle their long-disputed maritime border, hailing a “historic achievement” that potentially unlocks significant offshore gas production for both countries.

Negotiations between the neighbouring countries, which are still technically at war, had suffered repeated setbacks since their launch in 2020 but gained momentum in recent weeks with both sides eyeing revenue from potentially rich Mediterranean gas fields.

U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein floated a proposed final agreement earlier this

month that Israel welcomed, but Lebanon had sought some adjustments subsequently.

A major source of friction was the Karish gas field, which Israel insisted fell entirely within its waters and was not a subject of negotiation.

Lebanon reportedly claimed part of the field and Hezbollah, the powerful Iran-backed militant group that holds huge sway in Lebanon, threatened attacks if Israel began production at Karish.

Under terms of the agreement leaked to the press, all of the Karish field would fall under Israeli control, while another potential gas field, Qana, would be divided but its exploitation would be under Lebanon’s control.

Chandrachud nominated as next Chief Justice of India

U.U. Lalit's recommendation will begin the process for his appointment as the 50th Chief Justice of the country; if the government gives approval, he is expected to assume charge on November 9

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India U.U. Lalit nominated Justice D.Y. Chandrachud as his successor in a brief meeting held at the Supreme Court judges' lounge in the presence of all judges of the court on Tuesday.

Chief Justice Lalit's recommendation to the government would start the process for appointment of Justice Chandrachud as the 50th Chief Justice of India.

If the government approval comes through, Justice Chandrachud would be the first second-generation CJI. His father, Justice Y.V. Chandrachud, was the



D.Y. Chandrachud

16th CJI and one of the longest serving.

Chief Justice Lalit is scheduled to retire on November 8 at the end of a 74-day tenure as top judge. Justice Chandrachud is expected to be sworn in and assume charge as Chief Jus-

stice of India from November 9. He has a tenure of two years as Chief Justice until his retirement on November 11, 2024.

Judicial career

Justice Chandrachud was appointed judge of the Supreme Court on May 13, 2016. He was before that the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court from October 31, 2013.

Justice Chandrachud began his career as a judge in the Bombay High Court on March 29, 2000 until his appointment as the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court.

He was Additional Solicitor-General from 1998 until appointment to the

Bombay High Court Bench. He was designated a senior advocate by the Bombay High Court in June 1998 and had practised law at the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court.

Justice Chandrachud's career in law combines a blend of both practical experience in law and academics. He was a visiting professor of Comparative Constitutional Law at the University of Mumbai and the Oklahoma University School of Law, U.S.



Watch | How is the Chief Justice of India appointed?
bit.ly/3eIVXyb

EC allots ‘two swords, shield’ symbol to Eknath Shinde faction of Sena

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday allotted the ‘*dhal talwar*’ (two swords and shield) symbol to the Shiv Sena faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde for the upcoming Andheri (East) Assembly byelection.

The group will be

known as the Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena, a name which the EC approved on Monday, and will use the symbol allotted to it till the commission decides on the dispute between the Shinde group and the faction led by Uddhav Thackeray for control of the Shiv Sena name and symbol.

The two sides were asked by the EC to submit a list of three names and

symbols each by Monday. The poll body allotted the Thackeray faction the “flaming torch”, but none of the three options given by Mr. Shinde were agreed to on Monday and he was asked to submit new choices by Tuesday.

Mr. Shinde submitted two options – “sun” and “two swords and shield”.

The ‘*dhal talwar*’ was not on the list of free sym-

bols and resembled the symbol of the People’s Democratic Movement, two swords and shield.

The outfit was derecognised as a State party in 2004 and delisted on December 26, 2016.

The commission declared the symbol to be free and allotted it to Mr. Shinde’s group till it decides on the dispute between the warring factions.

Non-traditional livelihoods skilling of girls included in Beti Padhao scheme

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Expanding the mandate of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme, the Central government on Tuesday announced the inclusion of skilling of girls in non-traditional livelihood (NTL) options in its flagship programme.

The scheme will now also focus on increasing the enrolment of girls in secondary education, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects. Women have been historically under-represented areas such as technology.

Announcing the new inclusion in the scheme, Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani emphasised the im-



Smriti Irani at an event in New Delhi on International Girl Child Day. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

portance of convergence between various departments for providing quality education to empower girls. "Government has always encouraged and empowered girls to pursue vocation of their choice irrespective of gender stereotypes," Ms. Irani said.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed

between the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Minority Affairs. It emphasises convergence between Ministries and Departments to ensure adolescents complete their education, build skills, and enter the workforce in a diverse range of professions, including in STEM fields.

An operations manual to implement the scheme in districts was also launched at the event. A national committee headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development will be the apex committee to review the implementation of the scheme at regular intervals with State governments and Union Territory administrations, it said.

Three lakh and counting: RTI pleas pile up at information commissions across India

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

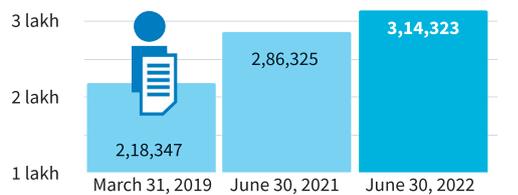
A good 17 years after India got the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the transparency regime in the country remains a mirage with nearly 3.15 lakh complaints and appeals pending with 26 information commissions across India.

According to a report by Satark Nagrik Sangathan, backlog of appeals or complaints is increasing in commissions every year.

The number of appeals and complaints pending in 2019, from data obtained from 26 information commissions was 2,18,347. In 2020, the number climbed up to 2,33,384 with data obtained from 23 information

Rising backlogs

Data gathered by the Satark Nagrik Sangathan show that appeals and complaints pending with information commissions have steadily increased over the years



commissions, in 2021 the number was 2,86,325 with data from 26 commissions and in 2022, it was 3,14,323.

The highest number of pending cases was in Maharashtra at 99,722, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 44,482, Karnataka at 30,358, the Central Information Com-

mission at 26,724 and Bihar at 21,346.

Commissions in trouble

The report says two information commissions—Jharkhand and Tripura—out of 29 across the country have been completely defunct for 29 months and 15

months respectively. Manipur, Telangana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are without chiefs at the moment. Only 5% of the all positions in commissions are being occupied by women. Also, several information commissions, including the Central Information Commission, are working at reduced capacity with less than the stipulated number of members being in office.

Under RTI law, information commissions are the final appellate authority and are mandated to safeguard and facilitate people's right to information.

An analysis of penalties imposed shows that the commissions did not impose penalties in 95% of the cases where penalties were

potentially impossible.

“The report shows that in several commissions a large backlog of cases has built up, resulting in a long waiting time for disposal, as governments have failed to make appointments of information commissioners in a timely manner,” said Anjali Bharadwaj of Satark Nagarik Sangathan.

According to a separate report by the Transparency International, one-fourth information commissioner posts are vacant and there are only 5% (only 8) women information commissioners in the country. Out of total 165 posts of information commissioners, 42 are vacant, including two chief State information commissioners.

What are the allegations against Google by the NBDA?

Why has the News Broadcasters and Digital Association locked horns with the search-engine giant over revenue sharing? Is the conflict between news publishers and Google unique to India?

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

On October 6, the News Broadcasters and Digital Association (NBDA) approached the Competition Commission of India (CCI) against search-engine operator Google, alleging that the latter had deprived them of their justifiable revenue acquired from news dissemination on the tech-giant's platforms. The complaint would be clubbed with similar cases filed by the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) in February this year and the Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA) last year.

Why is Google dominant?

As per the NBDA, Google's search engine commands a 94% market share in the country. The number becomes all the more crucial for news publishers with the

increased transition toward news consumption online (inclusive of app-based consumption). The traditional newspaper industry in India has sustained itself on a business model wherein advertising accounts for two-third of its total revenue. On similar lines, with online proliferation, there is an increased reliance of news publishers on digital ad revenues, and in turn, tech-based companies. More than half of the total traffic on news websites is routed through Google. The search engine, by way of its algorithms and internal quality vetting, determines which news websites would be prioritised in search queries. Essential to understand here is that search engines are an important determinant in online news consumption. Readers would more often opt for an online web search rather than reaching out to a specific news website by typing its

URL in a browser. This has made search-engines the first port of call for information online.

What are the key allegations?

Google has been found to be dominant in both markets of relevance to digital publishers – online web search services and digital advertising services. A news website sells advertising spaces on its platform through ad-exchanges. In addition to this, Google also operates a platform that manages a publisher's sale of online ads and tools to purchase display ad space. The central contestation among the parties holds that the tech-giant has not compensated news publishers for their contribution to (Google's various) platforms and has engaged in practices to bolster its monopoly in the space. The DNPA had put forth that website publishers receive

only 51% of the advertisement revenue. It has been alleged that owing to the tech-giant's dominance in the space, publishers have been "forced" to integrate content on their platforms. They have no other alternative but to trade in the company's exchanges and use its buying tool, Google Ads/DV 360, to receive bids from advertisers.

What is happening outside India?

In February this year, the European Publishers Council filed an anti-trust complaint against Google with the European Commission, challenging its existing "ad tech stranglehold" over press publishers. Australia introduced the 'Media Bargaining Code' in February to address the imbalance. As reported by *Reuters*, the code requires news outlets to negotiate commercial deals individually or collectively with Facebook and Google with violations calling for civil penalties of up to \$10 million. The tech firms would also have to give media outlets notice when they change search algorithms that may affect publishers' content.

According to Google, the revenues accrued are spent towards running "a complex and evolving business" such as maintaining data centres, further technological investments, enabling innovations that increase publisher revenue and maximising advertiser return on investment, among other things.

THE GIST

Along with the Indian Newspaper Society in February and the Digital News Publishers Association last year, the News Broadcasters and Digital Association has approached the Competition Commission of India against Google, alleging that the latter had deprived them of their justifiable revenue acquired from news dissemination on the tech-giant's platforms.

The central contestation is that the tech-giant has not compensated news publishers for their contribution to Google's platforms and has engaged in practices to bolster its monopoly in the space.

The European Publishers Council has also filed an anti-trust complaint against Google with the European Commission, challenging its existing "ad tech stranglehold" over press publishers.

UN Secretary-General, PM to launch initiative on environment in Gujarat

The programme, which is part of the 'Lifestyle For Environment' initiative, will be held at the Statue of Unity in Kevadia next week and attended by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, over a hundred diplomats and heads of Indian missions

Sahasini Haidar
Mahesh Langa

NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will travel to India next week to attend the launch of a special environmental programme, along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, at the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, Gujarat.

Hundreds of officials and over a hundred diplomats and heads of Indian missions will participate.

The programme, which is part of the "Lifestyle for Environment" (LiFE) initiative announced by Mr. Modi in June, will be organised by the NITI Aayog.

Sources confirmed that Mr. Guterres, who will be in India from October 18 to 20, will participate in the LiFE event, and also visit a field project to highlight



Antonio Guterres with Narendra Modi. PTI

climate change challenges and solutions for the world.

In addition, he will deliver a public address to students at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, where his focus is expected to be on global environmental crises.

During a visit to Pakistan last month, where he called those affected by de-

vastating floods in that country as victims of a "grim calculus of climate injustice", Mr. Guterres said "climate chaos is knocking on everyone's door" and needed a global response.

The event at Kevadia will kick off a number of other governmental plans to mark Sardar Patel's birthday on October 31 as

National Unity Day. From October 25 to 31, the government will launch "Unitea" marches in all 750 districts of the country to highlight health and environment issues as well.

HoM conference

Prior to the LiFE event, Indian Ambassadors and High Commissioners are expected to congregate in Kevadia for the annual Heads of Mission (HoM) conference.

The HoM conference is expected to include several special programmes to celebrate India's 75 years of Independence, the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, and will mark the second visit by Dr. Jaishankar this month. The Minister had invited more than 50 foreign diplomats based in Delhi to Vadodara to participate in Navratri festivities and Dandiya in the city in early October, and had also taken them for a tour of Ke-

vadia and the Statue of Unity.

An official told *The Hindu* at least 120 HoMs would participate in the Kevadia conference from October 19 to 22. According to the official, Dr. Jaishankar will be in Gujarat from October 17 and will attend the inauguration of the Defence Expo being held in Gandhinagar, before travelling to Kevadia.

The events in Gujarat are seen as a special attempt by the government to highlight the State in the run-up to Assembly election in December. Mr. Modi completed a three-day visit to various Gujarat cities where he addressed public rallies and inaugurated a number of infrastructure projects.

In October 2019, World Bank President David Malpass had visited to address probationers of the Civil Services at the Tent City in Kevadia near the statue.

Urban consumers are still not confident enough

Manufacturing, service and infrastructure sectors are on the recovery path, but consumer confidence about the economy is yet to reach pre-COVID levels

DATA POINT

Rebecca Rose Varghese
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The share of urban consumers pessimistic about the Indian economy continued to decline in September 2022 as COVID-19 cases continued to fall. But the share of those pessimistic about the economy was still double the share of those who were optimistic about it. This shows that there is a long road to complete recovery.

Chart 1 shows the responses from a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) survey conducted across 19 major cities between September 1 and 10. When asked about their current perception about the economic situation, 59.2% said it had worsened in September 2022. This was the lowest share since the pandemic outbreak, but it was still more than double the share of those who said the economic situation had improved (26.2%, and not plotted on the graph).

Chart 1 also shows that 54% of respondents were pessimistic about their current employment scenario. Notably, since May 2022, the share has remained stagnant, pointing to muted recovery on the employment front in recent months. Consequently, the share of urban consumers worried about their income levels has also remained stagnant since May 2022.

Worryingly, close to 95% of the respondents said price levels of commodities had increased. This is not surprising given that retail inflation has remained high in India. So, while the degree of pessimism about the economy has declined, the rapid build-up in confidence about jobs and income levels has been arrested in the five months ending September. Add the high price levels to the mix and it paints a grim picture about the recovery of consumer confidence.

Chart 2 shows the growth in new orders received by manufacturing companies surveyed by the

RBI. The survey covered 734 companies and provides a snapshot of demand conditions in India's manufacturing sector. The latest data are for the April-June 2022 period. Data show that new orders increased for manufacturing firms in the last four quarters.

Chart 3 shows the results of the RBI survey that captures the growth in services and infrastructure sectors. The latest data are for the July-September 2022 period. Nearly 590 companies were asked to comment on whether their turnover had increased, decreased or stood still. The chart plots the net response – the difference between those who said it increased and those who said it decreased. So, a positive number points to a higher share of companies recording an increase in turnover and a negative number points to the opposite.

Chart 3 hints at a possible recovery in the turnovers of both the service and infrastructure sectors. In the latest period, 51.2% of service sector companies reported that their turnovers had increased, 40.3% reported that there was no change and only 8.5% said their turnovers had decreased. The net response was +42.7% points. This is higher than the pre-pandemic levels. However, the trend has to be read with caution given the base effect at play due to very low levels of positive responses during the pandemic period. A similarly positive net response was also reported by the infrastructure firms.

Chart 4 plots the results of the RBI's quarterly bank lending survey. Senior loan officers were asked to assess loan demand in this survey. The latest data are for the July-September 2022 period. **Chart 4** too plots the net response. Every sector, led by the retail segment, recorded an increase in loan demand in the latest quarter.

This means that the manufacturing, service and infrastructure sectors are firmly on the recovery path with the demand for loans continuing to grow.

Recovery tracker

The charts show the results of various surveys conducted by the RBI on urban consumer confidence, orders received by manufacturing companies, the turnover of the services and infrastructure sectors, and the demand for bank loans



Chart 1 | Charts show the results of the RBI's consumer confidence survey conducted across 19 major cities between September 1 and 10



Chart 2 | The chart shows the q-o-q and y-o-y growth in new orders received by 734 manufacturing companies surveyed by the RBI



Chart 3 | The chart plots the net response of the services and infrastructure sectors companies. A positive number points to a higher share of companies recording an increase in turnover

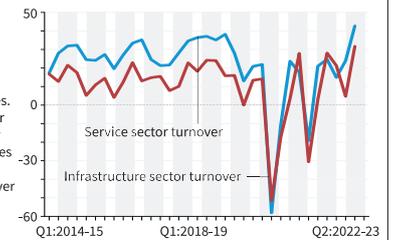
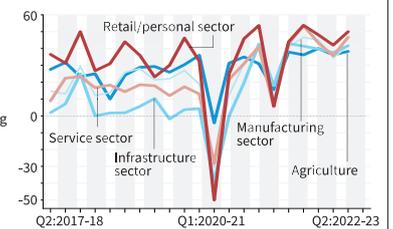


Chart 4 | The chart plots the net response of the assessment of loan demand among various sectors, according to the RBI's quarterly bank lending survey



IMF cuts India's growth forecast to 6.8% this year

The Fund cites Ukraine war, record-high inflation and effects of pandemic as key reasons; it expects inflation in the country to return to the tolerance band in the fiscal year 2023-24

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON DC

The world, including India, will experience an overall slowdown in the next year owing to the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, tightening monetary conditions globally, the highest inflation in decades, and lingering effects of the pandemic, according to the International Monetary Fund.

India is projected to grow at 6.8% in the current fiscal year, following 8.7% growth in fiscal year that ended March 31 as per figures released in the IMF's October 2022 *World Economic Outlook: Countering the Cost-of-Living Crisis* at the start of the World Bank IMF Annual Meetings here.

Growth rate for this year

Growth cut

The chart shows India's economic growth forecast for the current financial year. The IMF's cut in growth forecast comes after the RBI and the World Bank revised their forecast for FY23



for India has been revised downward by 0.6 percentage points relative to the IMF's June 2022 forecast, following a weaker output in the second quarter, and subdued external demand, the IMF said. The forecast for the next fiscal year remains unaltered at 6.1%.

"India has been doing fairly well in 2022 and is expected to continue grow-

ing fairly robustly in 2023," the IMF's chief economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said at a press briefing in Washington on Tuesday morning.

Inflation above target

Inflation in India was above the RBI's target, Mr. Gourinchas said, adding that the fiscal and monetary policy should be

"probably be on the tightening side". The IMF has projected 6.9% consumer price inflation this year and 5.1% next year.

The IMF expects inflation in India to return to the inflation tolerance band... in fiscal year 2023-24, "and additional monetary tightening is going to ensure that that happens", IMF economist Daniel Leigh said at the briefing.

For the world as a whole, growth will slow down from 6.0% in 2021 to 3.2% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023. This is reflective of a U.S. GDP contraction in first half of 2022, a Euro Area contraction in second half, extended COVID-19 outbreaks in China and a property sector crisis.

IMF cuts India's growth forecast to 6.8% this year

The U.S. is expected to grow at 1.6% this year followed by a slowing down to 1.0% growth next year. The Euro Area is expected to grow 3.1% this year and 0.5% next, while China is forecast to grow at 4.4% next year, followed by a projected 3.2% this year.

“The three largest economies, the United States, China, and the euro area will continue to stall,” Mr. Gourinchas said in a statement released before the briefing. “Overall, this year’s shocks will re-open economic wounds that were only partially healed post-pandemic. In short, the worst is yet to come and, for many people, 2023 will feel like a recession.”

There remain high downside risks to the forecasts, as per the IMF. Monetary policy that seeks to restore price stability is the starting point to mitigating these risks, the report said.

Mr. Gourinchas cautioned against fiscal policy working at cross purposes with the monetary authorities’ actions to curb inflation. Fiscal policy can assist economies to adapt to a volatile environment by investing in human capital, supply chain diversification, digitization, green energy, he said.

Permanent change

“The energy crisis, especially in Europe, is not a transitory shock. The geopolitical realignment of energy supplies in the wake of the war is broad and permanent,” Mr. Gourinchas said, adding that countries should target fiscal support towards the vulnerable via temporary transfers rather than focus on price controls, untargeted subsidies and export bans.

Emphasising that a large number of low-income countries, “too many”, are in or near debt distress, the chief economist urged orderly debt restructuring via the Group of Twenty (G20)’s Common Framework. The issue of debt sustainability had been raised by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on his recent visit to the U.S. and listed as an area of potential focus for India’s forthcoming G20 presidency by World Bank President David Malpass last week.

Ministries urged to shun 'inflated' demands for funds

Finance Ministry seeks 'objective' proposals for first supplementary demands for grants for FY23; PAC earlier said dept. demands marked by 'bad planning, lack of foresight, ineffective monitoring'

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has asked all Ministries to weed out 'infructuous or inflated' funding requests and tap savings from their existing Budget allocations before seeking more funds for this year.

The Ministry has urged departments to 'avoid pitfalls' in spending that have been flagged by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and mooted a thorough and objective assessment of the additional funds required as supplementary demands for grants.

In a memo issued on



Bear in mind: In an earlier report, the PAC said departments had taken a 'tepid approach' in preparing Budget estimates. FILE PHOTO

Monday, the Department of Economic Affairs sought proposals from Ministries by November 11 for the first batch of supplementary demands to be placed in

the upcoming Winter session of Parliament. Officials in line Ministries processing supplementary demand proposals have been instructed to 'invaria-

bly identify savings so that infructuous or inflated demands' are weeded out.

Departments have been reminded about PAC's observations in an earlier report on 'Excess expenditure' rapping them for a 'tepid approach' in preparing Budget estimates and supplementary demands marked by 'bad planning, lack of foresight and ineffective monitoring'.

While the Finance Ministry itself has advised departments to propose supplementary demands in the Winter session in some cases, broadly, Ministries have been advised to only seek more funds in certain other cases.

Farmers' outfits question delay in announcing MSP for ongoing Rabi season

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Farmers' organisations have questioned the delay in announcing the minimum support price (MSP) for crops in the ongoing Rabi season even as sowing has started in several States. Farmers point out that announcing the MSP is important so that they can select the crops that have to be sown during the season.

Shamli-based farmers leader Jitender Singh Hudda urged the Centre to implement the Swaminathan Commission formula to decide the MSP and include comprehensive input cost, including rental value of land plus 50%. "The input cost for fuels, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, labour and transportation has increased. Agricultural instruments and their maintenance have also become costly," Mr. Hudda said.

The RSS-affiliated farmers' outfit Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) said it was not consulted either by the



Late arrival: In 2020, the MSP for Rabi was announced on September 23 and in 2021, on September 8. K.V.S. GIRI

Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) or the Centre this time. "Earlier, there used to be two members representing farmers in the CACP. Now, there are no members representing farmers, and the MSP is calculated based on available statistics before the government," said BKS general secretary Mohini Mohan Mishra.

All-India Kisan Sabha president Ashok Dhawale said the CACP generally send invitation for discussion. "We placed our opinion when the CACP consulted us before the Kharif

sowing. However, we believe that whatever consultations held on MSP were a mere formality so far," Dr. Dhawale said. He added that there was tremendous increase on the input price, particularly insecticides and fertilizers. "The MSP has to be hiked a lot if some kind of a justice has to be done to the farmers. The Centre should have announced the MSP in September itself. Otherwise, how will the farmer decide what should be sown and what should not be. They should have the MSP figures before them to take a decision," he added.

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.