



VEDHIK

DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Vedhik - Daily News Analysis (DNA)_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Vedhik - Daily News Analysis (DNA)_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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AnSI builds tribal hut replicas to help preserve, promote unique heritage

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

From a distinctive beehive-shaped hut of the Jarawa tribe to a Shompen hut crafted with leaves of *jungle supari* with a cage for wild pigs built beneath it, and a Nicobarese hut made using the thin stems of local cane covered by thick dry grasses – each offers a peek into the lives of tribal communities that most Indians will never see.

In a first-of-its-kind bid to showcase the heritage of tribal communities, especially those of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) has recreated the huts of several communities at its different regional centres.

The effort has drawn praise from several quarters, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“Laudable effort, which will spread awareness of India’s glorious tribal culture and traditions,” Mr. Modi said on November 3, commenting on a tweet by the Ministry of Culture,



Visitors at the Nicobarese tribal hut which is made using thin stems of local cane covered by thick dry grasses.

which said the initiative would help promote “cultural heritage and optimise unused spaces”.

These huts have come up outside five regional centres of the AnSI in consultation with the local communities, M. Sasikumar, Joint Director, AnSI, told *The Hindu*, adding that researchers and scientists have worked on constructing them during the entire month of October.

Authentic design

Mr. Sasikumar said that the huts are not only authentic in design, and built using the same materials used by the tribal people, but also

contains artefacts which they use, thus offering a rare glimpse into the lives of these communities who reside in locations which are not easily accessible to others.

For instance, the traditional Jarawa hut, called a *chadda*, has traditional baskets, bows and arrows, and other artefacts used by the community.

“The zonal anthropological museums of AnSI are important tourist destinations and the construction of these tribal huts and a monolith within the premises will help increase interest of visitors,” Mr. Sasikumar said.

The continuing stalemate in Myanmar

Twenty-one months after a military coup, which derailed a decade-old experiment with limited democracy, Myanmar is struggling to cope with the consequences. People are suffering, authorities and opposition forces are locked in a cycle of violent clashes, the economy is deteriorating, and ASEAN's mission to produce a solution has failed.

Internal scene

When the Tatmadaw (military), unhappy with the victory of the Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy in the November 2020 elections, chose to violate the constitution, it acted in the belief that the people would accept its diktat, as they had done in previous decades. Clearly, it underestimated public anger and their commitment to freedom and democracy. Even after killing over 2,300 people and imprisoning thousands, including Ms. Suu Kyi, the military still faces a rebellion. Its plan to hold an election next year stands jeopardised.

With two key dimensions, the opposition has prevented the military from having its way. First, the parallel National Unity Government (NUG) may not be recognised by any state, but it continues to receive political and financial support from abroad. It has effectively channelled popular indignation against military rule, while still being vulnerable due to the paucity of resources and the absence of a visible leader. Second, the about 20 ethnic armed organisations (EAOs), located in the east, north and west of Myanmar's periphery, have divergent approaches towards the post-coup conflict. Many view it as an intra-Bamar contestation, an issue of limited concern to them. Some like the Karens and Kachins support the NUG, while others, especially those controlled or supported by China, remain aloof. Those operating in the Chin and Rakhine states are engaged in a fierce armed conflict with the military and have enfeebled it. But



Rajiv Bhatia

is Distinguished Fellow at Gateway House. A former Ambassador to Myanmar, he is the author of *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours*

The principal responsibility to construct a solution must rest with the Myanmar elite and leadership of both camps

overall, due to their divergences and relative weaknesses, the EAOs are unlikely to defeat the military.

Thus, while the opposition has performed well, it is unable to turn the tide in its favour, without a nationwide front against the Tatmadaw. National reconciliation between the military and civilian forces, and ethnic reconciliation between the majority Barmars and ethnic minorities, have been put on hold. Ms. Suu Kyi, 77, the most popular leader, has been sentenced to 26 years of imprisonment in multiple cases on apparently trumped-up charges.

Besides, 1.1 million Rohingyas, driven by military oppression to seek shelter in Bangladesh in 2017, continue to languish there. Dhaka's efforts to arrange their safe return have failed. Armed clashes between the military and their ethnic opponents in the border region are having a spillover effect in Bangladesh. Dhaka continues to show restraint and a preference for diplomacy to manage the situation.

International dimensions

The UN has been forthright in criticising the coup. It has expressed concern over continuing violence, support for a 'democratic transition', a release of all political prisoners and dialogue among the parties concerned. However, the UN Secretary General's special envoy has had little success in promoting peace. The UN's failure lies in the sharp divisions within the international community on how to deal with this vexed issue.

The western powers have been severely critical of the military. They have put in place several restrictive measures and imposed more sanctions. They have extended support to the NUG. On the other hand, Russia has given considerable backing to the military regime, seeing in its own isolation an opportunity to strengthen bilateral cooperation in defence and energy supplies. China is keeping a door open to democratic forces even while

doing business with the regime and exploiting every opportunity to ensure progress on the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. ASEAN is divided in three ways: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore are pro-democracy; Thailand and Laos are pro-military; and Vietnam and the Philippines are ambivalent. This disunity and the Tatmadaw's refusal to cooperate with ASEAN have led to the non-implementation of the Five-Point Consensus. The upcoming ASEAN summit may provide clues on whether the grouping can forge a united stand and devise something that works better. India is concerned as the post-coup conditions have adversely impacted its interests and hampered bilateral cooperation. Mega projects stand delayed. Some 50,000 refugees, as per unofficial estimates, have been camping in Mizoram.

Meanwhile, there is an erroneous perception that India has abandoned the Myanmar people. The reality is that India proactively advocates an early restoration of democracy, the release of prisoners, and internal dialogue. Can India do more? It can explore the possibility of a combined mediatory role with ASEAN and like-minded neighbours. Will China have a role in such a group? India-China relations preclude that possibility.

Through greater unity, external players can help Myanmar in creating a suitable environment for dialogue on a political settlement. Distant countries such as Norway and Japan can play a helpful role as catalysts. But the principal responsibility to construct a solution must rest with the Myanmar elite and leadership of both camps. Through resilience and pragmatism, they crafted a way out in 2011-21. They must recreate that spirit. 'The Golden Land', where Lord Buddha is revered, needs to be re-inspired by his teachings. Else, a prolonged, contested military rule or a failed state seems a distinct possibility.

Centre issues alert on illegal stay of Bangladeshi nationals in the country

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Union government has issued an alert on the illegal stay of Bangladeshi nationals in India. The Directors-General of Police of the States and Union Territories have been told to take appropriate action on the illegal immigrants who sneaked into the country along the Bangladesh border in West Bengal and settled across the country, sources said on Sunday.

Security agencies were informed of a well-connected network of local people and agents in West Bengal that was facilitating the foreign nationals to gain entry, obtain original documents with the help of fake addresses, identities, and so on. The illegal immigrants who initially obtained Aadhaar cards moved to different parts of the country to get employment and settled there. Some managed to get other proof of address or identity such as bank passbook, voter identity card and



Wide network: The police said agents were facilitating the foreign nationals to gain entry and obtain documents with fake identities.

PAN card, the sources said.

“These documents help them establish a fake identity at a given address and get employment. Many are using them to get passports to travel abroad. Since the documents, including the passport, are issued by the competent authority, the accused persons travel without being suspected or caught,” a senior police official told *The Hindu*.

Aadhaar cards

The Centre’s alert said some people in West Bengal were acting as agents by

providing fraudulently obtained Indian identity documents, particularly Aadhaar cards, for a fee.

The foreigners posing as Indian nationals used the documents for various purposes across India, the official quoted the advisory as saying and added that the accused foreign nationals were settled in several States, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.

Days after the alert was issued, the Union Home Ministry empowered the District Collectors of Mehsana and Anand in Gujarat

to grant citizenship certificates to members of Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Buddhist and Jain communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

T.N. Police drive

A couple of years ago, the Tamil Nadu Police launched a drive against Bangladeshi nationals who had settled in various districts posing as natives of West Bengal and got employment in the construction, hospitality and textile industries. Some were arrested under the provisions of the Foreigners Act and lodged in prisons. A majority of such suspects were settled in Tirupur, Chengalpattu, Erode, Cuddalore and Kancheepuram districts.

During the pandemic lockdown when a few lakhs of migrant workers left for their respective home States, the Bangladeshi workers stayed on. Some of them indulged in activities such as drug peddling during the period, the sources added.

COP-27 puts climate compensation on agenda for first time

'This won't guarantee compensation or necessarily acknowledge liability, but is intended to lead to a conclusive decision no later than 2024'

Reuters

SHARM EL-SHEIKH

Delegates at the COP-27 climate summit in Egypt agreed after late-night talks to put the delicate issue of whether rich nations should compensate poor countries most vulnerable to climate change on the formal agenda for the first time.

For more than a decade, wealthy nations have rejected official discussions on what is referred to as loss and damage, or funds they provide to help poor countries cope with the consequences of global warming.

COP-27 President Sameh Shoukry told the plenary that opens this year's two-week United Nations conference attended by more than 190 countries the decision created "an institutionally stable space" for discussion of "the pressing issue of funding arrangements".

At COP-26 last year in Glasgow, high-income nations blocked a proposal for a loss and damage financing body, instead supporting a three-year dialogue for funding discussions.

No guarantee

The loss and damage discussions now on the COP-27 agenda will not guarantee compensation or necessarily acknowledge liability, but are in-



Future proofing: Delegates attending the opening ceremony of the COP-27 meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt on Sunday. AFP

tended to lead to a conclusive decision "no later than 2024", Mr. Shoukry said.

The issue could generate even more tension than at previous conferences this year as the Ukraine war, a surge in energy prices and the risk of economic recession have at once added to governments' reluctance to promise funds and poor nations' need for them.

Negotiations on Saturday night before the agenda's adoption "were extremely challenging," Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at the non-profit Climate Action Network International, said. "Rich countries in the first place never wanted loss and damage to be on the agenda."

Some criticised the dismissive language on liability, but although weaker than hoped, getting the issue formally on the agenda will oblige wealthier na-

tions to engage on the topic.

"They rightly expect more solidarity from the rich countries, and Germany is ready for this, both in climate financing and in dealing with damage and losses," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in a statement.

Protective shield

Germany wants to launch a "protective shield against climate risks" at the conference, an initiative it has been working on with vulnerable states such as Bangladesh and Ghana.

Bangladeshi-based environmental research body, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development said it was "good news" loss and damage was officially on the agenda.

"Now the real work begins to make finance a reality," Salmeel Huq, director of the centre, said.

An electoral pivot that restores Brazil's democracy

In the presidential election in Brazil, on October 30 (the second round), the two-time former President, and leader of the leftist Worker's Party (PT), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva – universally known as Lula – defeated the far-right incumbent president, Jair Bolsonaro. The election could not have been more pivotal or more consequential; nothing less than a referendum on democracy itself. Mr. Lula's win brings to an end the reign of a right-wing populist who has relentlessly attacked democratic institutions, revelled in misogyny and homophobia, celebrated the gun culture, demised Brazil's slum dwellers as criminals and drug traffickers, and accelerated the burning of the Amazon. There is little doubt that a second-term Bolsonaro would have accentuated the authoritarian turn, with a deepening reliance on the military to run the government, the ongoing politicisation of Brazil's once robust federal bureaucracy, the packing of the Supreme Court, and the erosion of civil liberties at the hands of a federal police force beholden to Mr. Bolsonaro.

What Lula da Silva's return means

The electoral pivot brings back a centre-left party that presided over an era of dramatic poverty-reduction and expanded social rights from 2003-2014. It brings back a coalition of Brazil's large and disproportionately black class of the labouring poor (the social class that gave Mr. Lula the most support), women who supported Mr. Lula overwhelmingly in what is still a deeply patriarchal society and progressive elements of the middle class. It promises to usher back in policies that favour moderate redistribution and a commitment to deepening social rights and environmental protection, including slowing the world-catastrophic destruction of the Amazon. But maybe, most decisively, Mr. Lula's return brings back a leader and a party that played a historic role in consolidating Brazil's democracy, and that when in power, have pioneered some of the boldest and most effective efforts to promote participatory democracy anywhere in the democratic world.

Mr. Lula's victory margin was narrow, 51.9% to Bolsonaro's 48.1%, the narrowest in Brazil's presidential history. Given Mr. Bolsonaro's disastrous management of the COVID-19 crisis, his constant attacks on democratic institutions and basic science, his habit of appointing unqualified sycophants (often military generals) as Ministers, and an almost continuous stream of scandals, polls and pundits alike had just a few months ago predicted a runaway Lula victory. The first round of the election, which took



Patrick Heller

is Professor of Sociology and International and Public Affairs, Brown University

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's win is the most decisive reversal of a great wave called an Age of Reaction* – a wave that has seen reactionary regimes come to power across a range of electoral democracies

place October 2, revealed a deep reservoir of conservatism in Brazil as well as a very effective reactionary coalition. Not only did Mr. Bolsonaro do better than predicted, but his right-wing allies in congressional and gubernatorial elections outperformed all other parties. The conservatism is rooted in Mr. Bolsonaro's alliance with Evangelical churches, a rapidly growing demographic that now accounts for a third of Brazil and favours traditional family values which include opposing gay marriage and abortion.

In Bolsonaro, a reactionary mode of politics

But it was also reactionary, in the sense of a concerted effort to roll back social achievements of the previous PT governments, reign in the independence of liberal institutions such as the judiciary and the bureaucracy, unleash police forces and allied militias in fighting criminality – which more often than not means a war on *favela* (slum) populations – and give free reign to sectoral interests such as agro-business and its anti-environmental agenda.

The reactionary mode of politics was in full display during the campaign. There was an escalation of political violence, most of it fuelled by Mr. Bolsonaro's supporters. Social media disinformation reached new heights, with WhatsApp groups spewing an endless stream of conspiracy theories and vitriol, including claims that Mr. Lula had a pact with Satan to close churches if he came to power. Evangelical preachers openly campaigned for Mr. Bolsonaro. Militias that have ties to Mr. Bolsonaro, the federal police and right-wing businesses, were all mobilised.

Mr. Lula's victory was initially met by protests from Mr. Bolsonaro's supporters and calls for the military to intervene. But Brazil's institutions have held fast and most of Mr. Bolsonaro's political allies have publicly accepted the outcome. Mr. Lula's return to power – his presidency begins on January 1 – bodes well for democracy. With Mr. Bolsonaro gone, the public sphere will now be spared his constant "*discurso de ódio*" (hate speech) and may actually get back to debates about social policies, the economy, and protecting the Amazon. Despite an adverse economic environment and a Congress and Senate that have strong representation of extreme right-wing groups, Mr. Lula will have a lot of room for manoeuvre. To begin with, he will be able to build back some of the impressive bureaucratic capacity that was built in the earlier PT period, but subverted by Mr. Bolsonaro. This will be especially critical in reinvigorating the capacity of the health and social welfare bureaucracies as well as the environmental protection agency.

Ironically, Mr. Lula will also be able to capitalise on some of Mr. Bolsonaro's own initiatives. Though ideologically hostile to state welfare, the COVID-19 pandemic forced Mr. Bolsonaro's hand as he ended up injecting more cash into Brazil's cash transfer programme (*Bolsa Família*), Mr. Lula's signature achievement in his previous two terms in office. Mr. Lula will now be able to build it out again. As conservative as Brazil is, there is, as in India, broad-based support for expanding welfare measures. The difference is that while Mr. Bolsonaro tried to patrimonialise welfare, that is create direct ties between himself and beneficiaries, a PT government will push to link welfare to basic social rights, and possibly even broaden the criteria of inclusion.

An institution man

So what does this all mean? First, this is the most decisive reversal of the great wave that I have called an "Age of Reaction" – a wave that has seen reactionary regimes come to power across a range of electoral democracies, including western Europe (most recently, Italy), eastern Europe, the United States (Trumpism, which is set to make a comeback this week in the U.S. congressional elections), India and the Philippines. As in all these regimes, Mr. Bolsonaro weaponised the classic conservative call to reinvigorate church, family and nation, into a sense of existential cultural threat from various "others", including assorted communists, secularists, human rights activists and immigrants, or in the case of India and Brazil religious or racial groups.

Second, Mr. Lula's victory reverses the growing narrative that the checks-and-balance liberal institutions of democracy are ineffective and elite-dominated, and should be replaced by direct support for the great leader. For all his personal popularity and charisma, Mr. Lula has always been an institution man: first as a union leader, then as a builder of a party that has a strong internal democratic culture, and finally as President who has been steadfast in his support for democratic norms and practices. Third, what the PT's return to power demonstrates is the possibility, even in a world of increasing precarity and inequality, of building a broad coalition of the poor and progressive elements of the middle class. Right-wing populists have long derided issues such as gender rights, fighting climate change, cultural pluralism and racial inclusion as the foibles of a politically correct cultural elite. Mr. Lula's social base and his track record show that these are and must be universal concerns and that the pursuit of social justice and social equality begins with a commitment to inclusive democracy.

The Uniform Civil Code

What were the Constituent Assembly debates about the UCC? What were the different arguments? Is uniformity even desirable for a nation that is as diverse as India? How have Courts looked upon the implementation of the UCC?

EXPLAINER

Diksha Munjal

The story so far:

Ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, Gujarat on October 29 joined the list of BJP-ruled States that have called for implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). Gujarat Home Minister Harsh Sanghani along with Union Minister Parshottam Rupala announced that the State will constitute a committee headed by a retired High Court judge to evaluate all aspects for implementing the UCC.

What did the Constituent Assembly say about the UCC?

Article 44 contained in part IV of the Constitution says that the state "shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India". While there is no draft or model document yet for the UCC, the framers of the Constitution envisioned that it would be a uniform set of laws that would replace the distinct personal laws of each religion with regard to matters like marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance. Part IV of the Constitution outlines the Directive Principles of State Policy, which, while not enforceable or justiciable in a court of law, are fundamental to the country's governance.

The clause on UCC generated substantial debate in the Constituent Assembly about whether it should be included as a fundamental right or a directive principle. The matter had to be settled by vote; with a majority of 5:4, wherein the sub-committee on fundamental rights headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel decided that securing a UCC was not within the scope of fundamental rights.

Members of the Assembly took starkly contrasting stances on the UCC. Some also felt that India was too diverse a country for the UCC. Member Naziruddin Ahmad from Bengal argued that certain civil laws in all communities were "inseparably connected with religious beliefs and practices". He felt the UCC would come in the way of Article 19 of the draft Constitution (now Article 25) which guarantees the right to freedom of religion subject to public order, morality, and health. While he was not against the idea of a uniform civil law, he argued that the time for that had not yet come, adding that the process had to be gradual and not without the consent of the concerned communities.

Member K.M. Munshi however, rejected the notion that a UCC would be against the freedom of religion as the Constitution allowed the government to make laws covering secular activities related to religious practices if they were intended for social reform. He advocated for the UCC, stating benefits such as promoting the unity of the nation and equality for women. He said that if personal laws of inheritance, succession and so on were seen as a part of religion, then many discriminatory practices of the Hindu personal law against women could not be eliminated.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had more of an ambivalent stance toward the UCC. He felt that while desirable, the UCC should remain "purely voluntary" in the initial stages. He stated that the Article "merely" proposed that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC, which means it would not impose it on all citizens. The amendments to protect personal laws from the UCC were eventually rejected.

What are the various arguments around the UCC?

It has been argued that while India does



'Uniform' diversity: Large number of men and women from various Muslim organisations in a protest against the Uniform Civil Code in 2016. FILE PHOTO

have uniformity in most criminal and civil matters like the Criminal Procedure Code, Civil Procedure Code, and the Contract Act, States have made over 100 amendments to the CrPc and IPC, as well as several amendments to civil laws. For instance, BJP-ruled States reduced the fines prescribed and justified by the Centre under the amended Motor Vehicles Act. Another example could be that the law of anticipatory bail differs from one State to another.

Experts thus argue that if there is plurality in already codified civil and criminal laws, how can the concept of 'one nation, one law' be applied to diverse personal laws of various communities? Besides, constitutional law experts argue that perhaps the framers did not intend total uniformity, which is why personal laws were placed in entry 5 of the Concurrent List, with the power to legislate being given to Parliament and State Assemblies.

Looking at the codified personal laws of various communities in India – all Hindus are not governed by a homogenous personal law even after the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill, neither are Muslims and Christians under their personal laws. Even at the time of drafting the Hindu Code Bill, several of its provisions actually sought to locate the complex links between the importance of inheritance, succession rights and the right to divorce. But facing staunch opposition from conservative quarters, it was amended, diluted, and watered down multiple times to finally be separated into four different Acts – the Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act – in the 1950s.

Constitutional law scholar Faizan Mustafa notes that while marriages amongst close relatives are prohibited by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, they are considered auspicious in the south of India. Even the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 made several compromises and could not make the daughter a coparcener till 2005. Wives are still not coparceners nor do they have an equal share in inheritance. Similarly, there is still no uniform applicability when it comes to the Muslim personal law or the Shariat Act that was passed in 1937. For in-

stance, the Shariat Act is not applicable in Jammu and Kashmir and Muslims continue to be governed by customary law which is at variance with the Muslim personal law in the rest of the country. The applicability also varies for certain sects of Muslims. Besides, many tribal groups in the country, regardless of their religion, follow their own customary laws

Experts argue that if there is plurality in already codified civil and criminal laws, how can the concept of 'one nation, one law' be applied to diverse personal laws of various communities

While the Supreme Court in 2019 hailed Goa as a "shining example" of an Indian State which has a functioning UCC, experts point out that the ground reality in Goa is more complex and that the Code has legal pluralities. The Goa Civil Code was given by the Portuguese in 1867; it permits a certain form of polygamy for Hindus while the Shariat Act for Muslims has not been extended to Goa with Muslims of the State being governed by Portuguese law as well as Shastric Hindu law. The Code gives certain concessions to Catholics as well. Catholics need not register their marriages and Catholic priests can dissolve marriages performed in church.

Meanwhile, the BJP's 2019 manifesto as well as the Uttarakhnd Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami's UCC committee proposal argue that the uniform code would be formed by taking the best practices of various religions and tailoring them for modern times. Researchers say this would essentially mean picking up certain Muslim practices and applying them to the Hindu community (or vice-versa), and question whether there would not be any opposition to the same.

What has the Supreme Court said about the UCC?

The Supreme Court in various judgements has called for the implementation of the UCC. In its *Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum* judgement of 1985, where a divorced Muslim woman demanded maintenance from her former husband, the apex

court while deciding whether to give prevalence to the CrPc or the Muslim personal law, called for the implementation of the UCC.

The Court also called on the government to implement the UCC in the 1995 *Sarla Mudgal* judgement as well as in the *Paulo Coutinho vs Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira* case (2019).

What has the Law Commission said?

The Modi government in 2016 requested the Law Commission of India to determine how to form a code in the presence of "thousands of personal laws" in the country. In 2018, the Law Commission submitted a 185-page consultation paper on the reform of family law. The paper stated that a unified nation did not necessarily need "uniformity", adding that secularism could not contradict the plurality prevalent in the country. In fact, the term "secularism" had meaning only if it assured the expression of any form of difference, the Commission noted. While saying that a UCC "is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage", the report recommended that discriminatory practices, prejudices and stereotypes within a particular religion and its personal laws should be studied and amended. The Commission suggested certain measures in marriage and divorce that should be uniformly accepted in the personal laws of all religions. Some of these amendments include fixing the marriageable age for boys and girls at 18 years so that they are married as equals, making adultery a ground for divorce for men and women and simplifying the divorce procedure. It also called for the abolition of the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) as a tax-exempted entity.

What is the government's stance?

While the UCC is a long-time poll promise of the BJP, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said in Parliament this year that the government currently had no plans to set up a panel to implement the UCC and requested the 22nd Law Commission of India to undertake an examination of various issues relating to the same. The chairperson and members of said Law Commission, which was set up in 2021, have not yet been appointed.

THE GIST

▼ Gujarat has joined the list of BJP-ruled States that have called for implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). While there is no draft or model document yet for the UCC, the framers of the Constitution envisioned that it would be a uniform set of laws that would replace the distinct personal laws of each religion.

▼ The clause on UCC generated substantial debate in the Constituent Assembly about whether it should be included as a fundamental right or a directive principle. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar felt that while desirable, the UCC should remain "purely voluntary" in the initial stages. He stated that the Article "merely" proposed that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC, which means it would not impose it on all citizens.

▼ It has been argued that while India does have uniformity in most criminal and civil matters like the Criminal Procedure Code and the Civil Procedure Code, States have made over 100 amendments to the CrPc and IPC, as well as several amendments to civil laws. Similarly, looking at the codified personal laws of various communities in India – all Hindus are not governed by a homogenous personal law even after the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill, neither are Muslims and Christians under their personal laws.

SC to pronounce EWS quota verdict today

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice of India U.U. Lalit is scheduled to pronounce judgment on Monday on the challenge to the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment which provides 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to the 'economically weaker sections [EWS] of the society' but excludes the 'poorest of poor' among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes from its ambit.

The other judges on the Bench are Justices Dinesh Maheshwari, S. Ravindra Bhat, Bela M. Trivedi and J.B. Pardiwala. November 7 is the last working day of Chief Justice Lalit.

Vital issues

The Bench had heard marathon arguments for seven days before reserving the case for judgment on September 27.



Some of the vital issues the judgment may address include whether the EWS quota violated the Basic Structure of the Constitution, whether the reservation was contrary to the equality code to treat all equally without discrimination, and more importantly if the reservation ate into the future prospects of merit-based candidates.

The government said the EWS quota was an "independent compartment". The court had repeatedly asked the government during the hearing whether the quota would take a piece of the pie from the 50% available non-reserved or open category. It also questioned the exclusion of backward classes from availing the quota.

Architecture, the profession, needs strengthening

It is 50 years since the Architects Act (1972) was passed to help build the modern profession of architecture. Architects have made steady progress since then, established contemporary design's value and expanded their professional base. There are now about 1,26,000 registered architects, with around 10,000 new registrations every year. However, instead of effusing confidence and success, architects seem to be facing the same dilemmas they confronted 50 years ago: the profession has yet to be recognised in its own right, there is bitter rivalry with its engineering cousins, low professional fee structures, poor protection from market forces and confusion about the road ahead. Equally perplexing are the solutions proposed and charting a path. There are many who want to seek the legal route, amend the Act and demand that the state protect the profession further.

A legal route is futile

If history has any lessons to offer, it is the opposite. Acts do not guarantee excellence. Choking regulations are counterproductive; market forces are powerful and can countervail barriers to competition. In this context, pursuing a legal route to take on multitudinous challenges will be unproductive and futile. Instead, architects can do better if they abandon archaic notions of 'profession' built on narrow jurisdictional boundaries and focus on broad-basing practice, investing in internal cohesion, and improving professional ethics and quality of services. The path to securing a professional Act in architecture was not easy. Architecture emerged as a distinct profession and formed an influential association in the 19th century in the United Kingdom, but that was not the case in India. There were not enough architects or institutions to ensure parallel development. The first national-level association of architects was formed in 1929 with 158 members, many of whom were in Bombay. When professionalisation picked up momentum after independence, and professional legislation such



A. Srivathsan

is a professor at CEPT University, Ahmedabad

Instead of effusing confidence and success 50 years after the Architects Act was passed, architects seem to be facing the same dilemmas they confronted in the past

as the Dentists Act in 1948 and Indian Medical Council Act in 1956 were passed, it encouraged architects to revive their demands and struggle; they finally got their Act in 1972.

The Act was seen by architects as essential to separate them from those offering vocational services and also engineers. However, the government was unwilling to accept their demands and refused to make rendering architectural services exclusive to architects as it found many building services to be overlapping with those of engineers. The government only conceded to protect the title 'architect', which only qualified and registered professionals can use. Architects have had complaints since then.

Professionalisation is a monopoly of services given to those who acquire specialised knowledge. Eliot Freidson's definitive work on professionalism justifies this as an organising principle of division of labour and argues that such monopoly is required since professionals acquire, govern and develop a special knowledge that society needs. Architects who enthusiastically subscribe to this ideal view overlook three key facts. First, a profession has no intrinsic privileges but is secured only through state-supported legislation. Second, in the Indian context, the profession was not formed free of contestations, and the debates have not ceased. Third, more importantly, the ground conditions have altered over the last three decades, and as an extensive consumer of professional services, the market has established itself as the lead patron. It now wields power to bulldoze any barrier to competitive procurement of services.

The state view

State support for professions, which is critical to legitimise claims of a monopoly of services, has also been neither unconditional nor stable. Its view of what constitutes public good has changed and is currently aligned with the market economy. Large corporates and the building industry seek competition and lower fees. As patrons and powerful clients, they can ignore

provisions of the Architects Act and the protocols that flow from here. Further, they prefer handing over projects to consultancy firms that offer full services, that include design and construction.

More than in any profession, the dependency on the market and state has split architects into unequal groups. Using the categories described by Michael Reed, a scholar of organisational analysis, one can identify a minority group of influential elites and their larger firms on one side and a predominant group of independent architects with medium and small firms on the other. Elites view the market economy to their advantage and support competitive demands. They flourish when steep entry barriers, such as high turnover requirements imposed by the state and private firms, keep out many small and medium firms. This disparity cannot be addressed through legislation but can be engaged only through the professional collective.

A blueprint

The profession can strengthen itself in three ways. To begin with, it should quickly abandon the 19th and 20th-century definitions of the profession that relies on carving out exclusive jurisdictions. Architects should reimagine their profession as part of a system of practices that draws strength from related building services such as building science and project management. It would serve better to build an alliance of building professionals, increase their collective relevance and enhance bargaining power. The second aspect is to help smaller and medium firms by lobbying to remove severe entry barriers that deny them projects. Equally important is the third way. Strengthening what Freidson calls the 'soul of the profession' by focusing on 'practice and institutional ethics', thereby, enhancing the quality of services. If any amendment to the Act is taken up, it should acknowledge the changed conditions of practice and enable alliances between professions.

The views expressed are personal

Firm U.S. dollar saps gold, silver prices

B. Krishnakumar

Precious metals remained weak in October and closed lower for the seventh successive month. The sentiment was weighed down by a stronger dollar and elevated U.S. bond yields.

Comex gold closed 1.9% lower to close at \$1,640.7 at the end of October. Comex silver, however, closed al-

most unchanged at \$19.12.

In the domestic market, MCX gold closed marginally higher ₹50,322 per 10 gm while MCX silver gained 1.4% to ₹57,678 kg.

The short-term outlook for Comex gold is positive and the price could head to the \$1,725-1,730 range. A move above \$1,688 would strengthen the case for a rise to the target zone. A close below \$1,620 would

push the gold price to lower levels and invalidate the short-term positive outlook.

In the domestic market, MCX gold, too, reached the ₹51,500-52,000 target. In the short-term, the price of MCX gold is likely to head higher to the target zone of ₹52,200-53,000. A move above ₹51,300 would confirm this positive outlook while a fall below ₹49,800

would invalidate it.

To summarise, the short-term outlook for precious metals is positive in the short term. The medium-term outlook remains weak, and the downtrend is likely to resume on the completion of the anticipated short-term rise.

(The writer is a Chennai based analyst / trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)



Long-time coming: A SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket rolls to launch pad 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, U.S. on October 31 just before its launch. REUTERS

The Falcon Heavy launch: the most powerful operational rocket in the world

What is the recently launched Elon Musk-owned SpaceX rocket carrying to space? How is the U.S. military involved in this mission? Is this the first time the rocket has been launched? Have previous missions been successful?

Abhishek Chatterjee

The story so far :

On November 1, Elon Musk-owned SpaceX launched the Falcon Heavy rocket into a geosynchronous Earth orbit from the Launch Complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, U.S. This is considered as a National Security Space Launch for the U.S. military. The company hails this as the most powerful operational rocket in the world. This is the fourth launch of the giant rocket system, and the first one in nearly three years since its last launch in 2019.

What is its current mission?

The rocket is carrying satellites to space for the U.S. military in a mission named as U.S. Space Force (USSF)-44. The mission deployed two spacecraft payloads, one of which is the TETRA 1 microsatellite created for various prototype missions in and around the geosynchronous earth orbit. The other payload is for national defence purposes. It will place the satellites for the Space Systems Command's Innovation and Prototyping.

Space Systems Command (SSC) is the oldest military space organisation in the United States Armed Forces. It is responsible for developing, acquiring, equipping, holding and sustaining lethal and resilient space capabilities. SSC mission capability areas include launch acquisition and operations, communications and positioning, navigation and timing, space sensing,

battle management command, control, and communications, and space domain awareness and combat power.

The Falcon Heavy uses three boosters for added thrust and lift capacity. The centre booster plunged into the ocean as planned and the two side boosters landed on ground pads at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. These two boosters will be refurbished for a subsequent U.S. Space Force mission later this year, according to a press release by the Space Systems Command. The boosters are reused on other missions to cut down on mission costs.

What are the specifications of the Falcon Heavy rocket?

SpaceX claims Falcon Heavy to be the most powerful rocket in the world today by a factor of two. With a lifting capacity of around 64 metric tonnes into orbit, Falcon Heavy can lift more than twice the payload of the next closest operational vehicle, the Delta IV Heavy.

The rocket has a height of 70 m, a width of 12.2 m and a mass of 1,420,788 kg. Falcon Heavy has 27 Merlin engines which together generate more than five million pounds of thrust at lift-off, equalling around eighteen 747 aircraft at full power. This makes it the most capable rocket flying. The rocket can lift the equivalent of a fully loaded 737 jetliner, complete with passengers, luggage and fuel, to orbit, SpaceX said.

Merlin is a family of rocket engines developed by SpaceX for use on its Falcon 1, Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy launch

vehicles. Merlin engines use RP-1 and liquid oxygen as rocket propellants in a gas-generator power cycle. These engines were designed for recovery and reuse, according to SpaceX.

When was the Falcon Heavy last launched?

SpaceX last launched its Falcon Heavy rocket in June 2019 from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. It carried 24 satellites as part of the Department of Defense's Space Test Program-2.

The satellites included four NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) technology and science payloads to study non-toxic spacecraft fuel, deep space navigation, "bubbles" in the electrically-charged layers of Earth's upper atmosphere, and radiation protection for satellites, according to a NASA release. The space agency said that the mission was useful for smarter spacecraft design and benefitted the agency's Moon to Mars exploration plans by providing greater insight into the effects of radiation in space. It also tested out an atomic clock that could change how spacecraft navigates and looked at how the space environment around the Earth affects us.

Why was there a delay in the current mission ?

The mission was earlier scheduled for lift-off in 2020 but was delayed. The exact reasons for delaying the mission were not publicly disclosed but payload readiness issues were considered to be the cause.

Also, most of SpaceX's missions till date did not require the massive power of the Falcon Heavy.

What about the other launches of Falcon Heavy ?

The Falcon Heavy debuted in 2018 when SpaceX CEO Elon Musk sent his personal red Tesla Roadster, an electric sports car with a dummy driver, into space as a test payload. The car is still in space, orbiting around the sun, travelling as far away as Mars' orbit and, at times, as close as Earth's orbit. SpaceX launched the other two Falcon Heavy missions in 2019. One carried a TV and phone service satellite in orbit for Saudi Arabia-based Arabsat, and the other carried experimental satellites for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Are there any future launches?

SpaceX is said to be working on even bigger rockets. The company is targeting early December to launch its giant Starship rocket system, according to a report by Reuters.

These test flights of Starship are all about improving our understanding and development of a fully reusable transportation system designed to carry both crew and cargo on long-duration interplanetary flights, and help humanity return to the Moon, and travel to Mars and beyond, SpaceX said in its website.

The Musk-owned company claimed Starship to be the world's most powerful launch vehicle ever developed, with the ability to carry an excess of 100 metric tonnes to Earth orbit.

Camera traps renew hope for snow leopard in Kashmir

Rahul Karmakar

GUWAHATI

The first-ever recording of the snow leopard from the Baltal-Zojila region has renewed hopes for the elusive predator in the higher altitudes of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Camera trapping exercises by researchers from Nature Conservation Foundation (India), partnering with J&K's Department of Wildlife Protection, also raised hopes for other important and rare species such as the Asiatic ibex, brown bear and Kashmir musk deer in the upper reaches of the northernmost part of India.

"It is the first record of snow leopard from the Baltal-Zojila area. In fact, we have very limited records of the presence of snow leopards across J&K," Munib Khanyari, programme manager at NCF (India), told *The Hindu* on November 6.

But not much is known about the number of snow leopards in J&K and Ladakh.

"The Snow Leopard



The estimated population of the snow leopard is 50 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Population Assessment of India (SPAI) has been concluded so far in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The estimated population of the great cat is 50 and 100, respectively, in these two States," he said.

Various teams have been conducting surveys across the nearly 12,000 sq. km potential snow leopard territory of J&K for a few years now covering Gurez, Thajwas, Baltal-Zojila, Warwan, and Kishtwar. The surveys have often focused on the neighbouring areas of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Curbs lifted in Delhi as air quality improves

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Sunday revoked its November 3 order that called for emergency measures such as a ban on the entry of trucks into Delhi and plying of non-BS VI diesel-run light motor vehicles imposed under Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan. This was done as the air quality improved with favourable wind conditions.

The move to shut primary schools was taken at the discretion of the Delhi government as an emergency step till Tuesday.

According to the forecast by the Centre-run monitoring agency SAFAR on Sunday, the air quality in Delhi improved due to the change in wind flow from stubble-burning areas, leading to prevention of inflow of pollutants.

After two days of “severe” air pollution, the air quality of the national capital improved slightly to the upper end “very poor” category on Saturday, and improved further to the lower end of the “very poor” category on Sunday, as per data by the Central Pollution Control Board.

SEE ALSO

» **PAGE 2**

Helicopter accidents in October point to broader concerns

India scores poorly in licensing regime and organisational processes and over 40% of helicopter accidents have been due to pilot errors

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan & Rebecca Rose Varghese

In October, 13 people were killed in three accidents in India involving helicopters. On October 5, an Army aviation pilot was killed after a Cheetah helicopter crashed near Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. On October 18, a commercial chopper ferrying pilgrims from Kedarnath crashed, killing all seven on board. On October 21, a military helicopter crashed, killing all the five personnel on board, in the Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Over the years, there have been many such incidents resulting in hundreds of fatalities. Uttarakhand, where the latest accident involving a commercial copter took place, is a hotbed for chopper accidents. A conservative estimate based on incident reports by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) shows that at least nine helicopters, many of them ferrying pilgrims inside the State, met with accidents between 1990 and 2019. Map 1 shows the approximate take-off spots and intended landing spots of 72 commercial helicopters involved in accidents in that period. A high number of accidents was recorded in the Northeast too.

More than 150 people, including pilots, the crew and passengers, lost their lives in accidents involving commercial helicopters between 1990 and 2019 (Chart 2A). Between 1998 and 2021, 124 military personnel were killed in accidents involving defence helicopters (Chart 2B).

Over 40% of commercial helicopter accidents were due to pilot error (Chart 3). Harsh weather, the suspected reason behind the October 18 accident, was the reason for 19% of the accidents. About 9% were attributed to 'cable hit' (where a helicopter gets entangled in wires/cables used by locals in

mountainous regions to transport goods). These cables are often not marked with warning signs and are not visible from a distance, especially when the weather is poor. Close to 85% of the fatalities due to commercial helicopter accidents happened in broad daylight, 54% while the copters were cruising, and 37% when the copters were landing. Take-off seems to be the safest part of the flight, causing the least number of deaths in the 1990-2019 period.

An analysis of accidents involving commercial airplanes in the 1990-2019 period shows that there were 999 fatalities across India. However when analysed temporally, the number of accidents involving both helicopters and flights has reduced in the last decade compared to earlier periods.

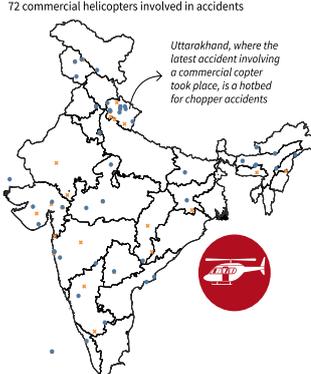
While the reasons for individual accidents vary, an analysis of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme shows some broader concerns with Indian aviation standards. The audit was conducted between 2016 and 2018 across eight broad areas (Chart 4). A country's score in each area is then compared to the world average, to arrive at deficient sectors. India scored well above the world average in six of the eight parameters but lagged behind in two – personnel licensing and training, and civil aviation organisation.

These two areas broadly deal with the establishment of relevant aviation agencies by the state, supported by sufficient and qualified personnel and adequate financial resources. They also involve the implementation of documented processes and procedures to ensure that personnel and organisations meet the established requirements before they are licensed to fly. A poor score in licensing regime and organisational processes, when read along with the fact that over 40% of helicopter accidents were due to pilot errors, point to a deeper problem behind these accidents.

Crash analysis

As many DGCA reports on accidents are pending release, the accident sites and number of fatalities are conservative estimates. The timing, phase of operation and reason behind these accidents were collated from the DGCA's accident reports. Chart 4 has been sourced from the International Civil Aviation Organization's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme

Map 1 | Take-off and intended landing spots of 72 commercial helicopters involved in accidents



ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Chart 2 | Fatalities and injuries in accidents involving commercial and defence helicopters between 1990 and 2019. The numbers for defence helicopters are based on Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha answers and are therefore conservative estimates

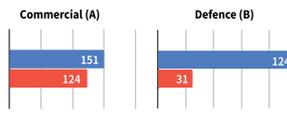


Chart 3 | Timing, phase and reason behind helicopter accidents

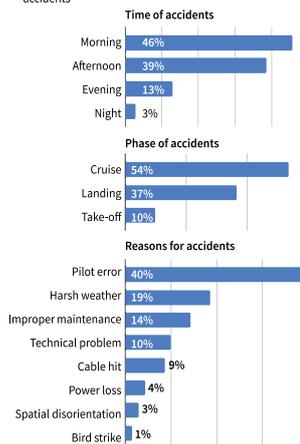
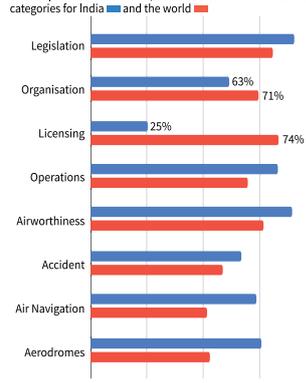


Chart 4 | ICAO's "effective Implementation %" score under various categories for India and the world



rebecca.varghese@thehindu.co.in vignesh.r@thehindu.co.in

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 war, re-drawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization;
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the India 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 provision 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 & privilege and issues arising out of these;

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
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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;
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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
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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
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G	Social influence and persuasion.
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