



# VEDHIK

## DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

29 - D E C - 2022

## 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.

## CONTENTS

- GSP 01 P Editorials - India must build awareness on population control
- GSP 01 P News - Norms to rank cities based on financial governance launched
- GSP 02 A Editorials - Nepal politics, past, present, and future
- GSP 02 B News - Trade pacts with Australia, UAE to help boost exports, say pro-motion councils
- GSP 02 E Editorials - A failed attempt at decriminalisation
- GSP 02 E News - As courts insist on triple-test rule for OBC quota in polls, State governments push back
- GSP 02 E News - Delegated law should not travel beyond purview of parent Act SC
- GSP 02 News - After 2020 COVID blip, road fatalities on the rise
- GSP 02 R Editorials - Laboured wages
- GSP 02 T Editorials - What is the proposal to ban the sale of single cigarettes
- GSP 03 A Editorials - Turning tide
- GSP 03 A News - Civil aviation seeing strong V-shaped recovery, says Scindia
- GSP 03 A News - 'FDI chasing services sector despite manufacturing push'

# *India must build awareness on population control*

**E**arly in December, two Members of Parliament of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Ravi Kishan and Nishikant Dubey, introduced in the Lok Sabha a private members' Bill aimed at population control in India. Stating that population rise is the most significant reason for India's slow rate of development, the Bill argues for an immediate need for population control. The debate and the discourse around India's rising population is not recent, having begun since Independence. India was among the first nations to address its population problem as early as 1951, raising awareness about the ills of overpopulation. While there has been a significant rise in India's population, there has also been a sharp decline in India's total fertility rate (TFR). In 1950, the TFR was at around 5.9%, and is now 2% (fifth round of the National Family Health Survey, or NFHS). There was a steep decline after the 1970s, indicating an inversely proportional relationship between economic prosperity and the fertility rate.

#### **A politicised debate**

The debate around the need for population control has been greatly politicised in India. The entirety of this discourse around such a sensitive issue is often reduced to a petty religious issue, and, ultimately, the subject of development suffers.

Nearly six months before the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the Yogi Adityanath government and the State Law Commission of Uttar Pradesh came up with a proposed draft Bill, i.e., the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021. Population is a grave concern in the Hindi heartland, especially Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, but the suggestions were



**Aryan Pandey**

is a student at Hindu College, University of Delhi, and a researcher with the Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)



**Sanjay Kumar**

is a Professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)

It is clear that the country does not need a law for forced population control

more political than practical. The visible attempt was towards an affirmation of the majoritarian politics being played out. For instance, the Bill said that no government job would be offered to couples with more than two children. However, there was no clarification about what would happen to a person who had a third child after being in a government job or if, for some reason, a person with two children remarried and had a third child.

In another instance, in July this year, while speaking on the occasion of population control fortnight, Mr. Adityanath, said, "It should not happen that the speed of population growth or the percentage of some community is high and we stabilise the population of the 'moolniwasi' (natives) through awareness or enforcement." This statement was perceived to underline the belief in parts of the Hindi heartland that it is a minority community that is responsible for the population burst. The Bill was seen to strengthen political polarisation and facilitate the politics of majority appeasement.

#### **Data shows otherwise**

However, data indicate otherwise. NFHS data indicate that although the fertility rate of Muslims is higher than Hindus, the gap between the two has shrunk substantially. In 1992-93, the gap between the Hindu and Muslim fertility rate was 1.1, which now has reduced to 0.35. A close comparison of Census data on average fertility rates is insightful. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, with around 20% Muslim population, the TFR declined from 5.8% in 1981 to 2.7% in 2011. In Assam, where the Muslim population is about 33%, the TFR is 1.9%. Similarly, in Jammu and Kashmir, where the Muslim population is the

majority, the TFR fell from 4.5% in 1981 to 1.4% in 2011. Data also show that Muslims have adopted better family planning measures than Hindus.

India's TFR, 2%, is even lower than the replacement level, signifying a remarkable step in the population control parameters. It is clear that India does not need a law for forced population control. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar too has countered the need for such a law by saying, "forced population control can have very dangerous consequences, it can create a gender imbalance". Forced population control measures have not shown promising results in the countries that have implemented them, the most relevant example being India's immediate neighbour, China. The one-child policy has proved to be disastrous, causing a demographic imbalance. The population of China is aging faster than in any other modern country, owing to the policies of forced population control.

#### **Strengthen the health infrastructure**

India needs to adopt population control measures. But the focus should be on strengthening public health infrastructure and raising awareness about the need for population control. Any forced control method will impact the rate of aging. United Nations data show that there is a projected rise in the population of older people and a decline in the young population in many countries. Although the trend started in rich countries such as Japan, the trend is now visible in developing countries as well, especially Southeast Asia. Among these trends, implementing forced population control can only have negative consequences.

*The views expressed are personal*

# Norms to rank cities based on financial governance launched

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday launched guidelines for a new finance-based ranking of cities, which would evaluate urban units on 15 key parameters, including resource mobilisation, expenditure performance and fiscal governance. A separate ranking will also evaluate cities on beautification.

The rankings are aimed at motivating city and State officials to implement municipal financial reforms.

“India has embarked on the most ambitious plan for urban rejuvenation undertaken anywhere in the world. A healthy sense of competition gives the best performing cities a sense of pride,” Minister for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Hardeep Singh Puri said. A ‘City Beauty Competition’ initiative was also launched to rank cities on accessibility and aesthetics.

# Nepal politics, past, present, and future

The general elections in Nepal that were held in November passed off peacefully but prospects for a stable government remain elusive. Neither of the two electoral coalitions has managed to secure a clear majority. Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' who had broken up with the United Marxist-Leninist (UML) in 2020 and joined the Nepali Congress (NC)-led coalition, once again switched to the UML. On Christmas day, he was appointed Prime Minister for the third time. To demonstrate his majority within 30 days, Prachanda will have to satisfy the demands of the UML and six other political parties with widely diverging agendas.

With 89 seats in a House of 275, the NC emerged as the largest party. It had an opportunity to form both the federal and six of the seven provincial governments with its coalition partners but missed the bus, thanks to the NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba's ego (he is 76 and after five stints, remains convinced of his destiny to be Prime Minister six times) and poor advice. Yet, 30 days is a long time in Nepal's politics and Prachanda may again realise too late that he had been manipulated by UML leader K.P. Oli.

## A messy transition

Nepal's transition from a monarchy to a republic began in 2008. In 15 years, Nepal has had three NC Prime Ministers (G.P. Koirala, Sushil Koirala and Mr. Deuba twice), two Maoist Prime Ministers (Prachanda twice and Baburam Bhattarai), three UML Prime Ministers (Madhav Nepal, Jhala Nath Khanal and Mr. Oli twice), and a Chief Justice as caretaker Prime Minister in 2013. In such a fluid environment, political horse trading has been rampant.

Following the adoption of the new Constitution in 2015, elections were held in 2017. Then too, Prachanda was in a coalition government with the NC, but a month before the elections, switched to form an electoral alliance with the UML. He soon realised that he was relegated to being the junior partner with 53 seats compared to the UML's 121. Mr. Oli assumed the post of Prime Minister in 2018 and despite promising Prachanda, never ceded control of the merged Nepal Communist Party.

Mr. Oli's authoritarian traits soon antagonised some of his senior colleagues, Madhav Nepal, Jhala Nath Khanal, and Bhim Rawal, who made common cause with Prachanda. However, Mr. Oli had a clear run till early 2020 because under the Constitution, a no-confidence-motion cannot be entertained for the first two years. By the



Rakesh Sood

is a former diplomat who served as Ambassador to Nepal

summer of 2020, intra-party rumblings came to the fore, creating a showdown by the end of the year. Fortunately for Prachanda, a Supreme Court judgement in early 2021, annulled the merger of Maoists with the UML, enabling Prachanda to claim his party back.

As Mr. Oli realised that he was losing his majority, he tried to retrieve the situation by recommending dissolution of the House. President Bidya Devi Bhandari has been Mr. Oli's close comrade since she entered active politics after the untimely demise of her husband Madan Bhandari, a charismatic UML leader, in a car accident in 1993. Mr. Oli had taken on the role of her political mentor and in 2018, backed her elevation to the presidency.

She reciprocated the favour by ignoring constitutional propriety and approving dubious ordinances that were repeatedly struck down by the Supreme Court.

The Maoists under Prachanda and the dissident group of the UML led by Madhav Nepal eventually jumped ship and backed the NC Sher Bahadur Deuba's appointment as Prime Minister in July last year. The three coalition partners had fought the elections as an alliance but Mr. Oli succeeded in splitting the alliance by weaning away Prachanda, who by his own admission, admits to being easily tempted.

## Election results of 2022

The 2008 elections saw the emergence of two new political actors, Maoists who had come overground after waging a decade-long insurgency and Madhesi who spearheaded the call for federalism. Over the years, they have lost their ideological moorings and have aligned with whichever group forms the government. From being the single largest party in 2008 with nearly 40% seats in the first Constituent Assembly, the Maoists are today reduced to 11%; the Madhesi have come down from 15% to 10%.

The 2022 elections have seen new political actors emerge. The Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), a creation of Rabi Lamichhane, a popular TV talk show host, became the platform for the millennial Nepalis, especially the diaspora. They were disenchanted with the self-serving leaders of the NC, the UML and the Maoist parties. However, the RSP MPs are a diverse group who campaigned on their individual platforms and with their own resources.

Similar disenchantment with the Madhesi parties led to the emergence of the Janmat Party, led by C.K. Raut, a former supporter of Madhesi secessionism, and the Nagarik Unmukt Party set up by a Tharu leader Resham

In a politically fluid environment, where horse trading is rampant, the India-Nepal relationship needs 'equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit' to sustain itself, irrespective of who is in power

Chaudhury who is behind bars, but his wife Ranjeeta Shrestha campaigned successfully in his name. The RSP, Janmat and NUP managed to win 20, six and three seats, respectively.

This fragmentation of votes has led to a lot of 'floaters' who can switch allegiances, just as Prachanda has done. Upendra Yadav (Janata Samajbadi Party) was in talks with the NC when it appeared that it would form the government but shifted back to the UML-Maoist group. The pro-monarchy pro-Hindutva Rastriya Prajatantra Party supporting the secular Communist alliance reflects the opportunism in Nepali politics.

Prachanda may think that he has a secure two-year term but with barely 32 seats (the UML has 78), it is clear that Mr. Oli will call the shots. He will ensure his own candidate as the president once Ms. Bhandari's term ends in March 2023. In the provinces, Maoists will be lucky to get one chief ministership.

## India's role

It is at times of political instability that Nepali politicians start looking for the convenient scapegoat of 'foreign interference'. India was conspicuously missing during the election campaign and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first to congratulate Mr. Prachanda on his appointment. After 2018, China had played a major role in bringing about a UML-Maoist alliance but failed to keep it intact. Senior Maoist leader Barshaman Pun was in China for medical treatment recently and reportedly played a role in the new UML-Maoist rapprochement.

In recent years, India has retrieved lost ground in Nepal by focusing on project implementation. Since 2022, the Jaynagar-Bardibas railway started with India providing technical support. In 2019, the long-awaited Motihari-Amlekgunj oil pipeline was inaugurated. Power generation in Nepal has picked up. The agreement to export 364 MW signed in June has yielded export earnings of \$60 million in 2022. According to the Nepal Electricity Authority, the figure could quadruple in 2023 with the 900 MW Arun 3 becoming operational.

Yet, there are some issues that need to be resolved. Foremost is the demonetised Indian currency issue, pending since 2016. Talks between the two central banks need a political nudge. The second is the recruitment for the Gurkha regiments, held up since the launch of the Agnipath scheme. As Mr. Modi declared during his last visit, the relationship needs "equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit" to sustain it, irrespective of who resides in Baluwatar.

# Trade pacts with Australia, UAE to help boost exports, say promotion councils

**Press Trust of India**

KOLKATA

Various export promotion councils (EPCs) on Wednesday lauded the trade agreements signed by India with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Australia, saying the pacts will help India boost exports by granting preferential access to those markets for Indian products.

Engineering Exports Promotion Council said India had benefited from preferential market access

**After the India-UAE pact, gem & jewellery exports to the region witnessed overall growth of 20%**

provided by the UAE on more than 97% of its tariff lines which account for 99% of Indian exports to the region in value.

The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which will come into force from December 29, is ex-

pected to create 10 lakh jobs, and raise Indian goods exports to Australia by \$10 billion.

Pankaj Parekh, regional chairman, the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, said the ECTA would help double India's gem and jewellery exports to Australia, from its current \$350 million to \$800 million in three years.

Post the India-UAE CEPA in May, gem and jewellery exports to the region witnessed an overall growth of 20%.

# A failed attempt at decriminalisation

What is the Jan Vishwas Bill tabled by the Union government in Parliament and what are its objectives? Is it the solution to the problem of overcriminalisation? What are the shortcomings of the Bill and how can it be overcome?

## LETTER AND SPIRIT

G.S. Bajpai  
Ankit Kaushik

Last week, the Union Government tabled the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2022, (Bill) in the Parliament with the objective of "decriminalising" 183 offences across 42 legislations and enhancing the ease of living and doing business in India. It is a welcome move and can be viewed as an attempt to reverse the trend of overcriminalisation. However, there is much that needs to be done in order to institutionalise efforts aimed at decriminalisation.

**Consequences of overcriminalisation**  
An unprincipled growth of criminal law has long been a cause of concern for scholars of law. Such growth is evident from the fact that criminal law is frequently used as a political tool; the act of criminalisation often becomes a medium for governments to put across a strong image as opposed to punishing wrongful conduct. Governments offer little in the way of justifications to support such decisions. This phenomenon has been termed "overcriminalisation" by scholars.

The consequences are felt almost immediately. As per the National Judicial Data Grid, of the 4.3 crore pending cases, nearly 3.2 crore cases are in relation to criminal proceedings. It is true to say that the growing number of pending criminal cases share a direct relation with the number of criminal laws. Similarly, the rise in the prison population is also proof of overcriminalisation. As per the National Crime Records Bureau's Prison Statistics of 2021, a total of 5.54 lakh prisoners were confined in prisons against a capacity of 4.25 lakh.

### Scope of the Bill

The Jan Vishwas Bill either omits penal provisions or replaces them with fines in legislations such as the Air Act, Environment Protection Act, Forest Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Acts, Cinematograph Act, Patents Act, Trade Marks Act and Informa-



**Need of the hour:** The time is now ripe to shift focus to existing penal offences such as sedition and offences under NDPS Act & UAPA Acts. AFP

tion Technology Act amongst several others. These are primarily offences which are regulatory in nature. By and large, an examination of the provisions of the Bill reveals that stress has been on the replacement of imprisonment clauses with fines. This can hardly be termed as 'decriminalisation'. There is much that is required for the efforts aimed at decriminalisation to fructify in any meaningful way.

Firstly, the Bill undertakes what we may refer to as 'quasi-decriminalisation'. In this context, Andrew Ashworth's arguments in relation to use of criminal laws in regulatory frameworks are particularly poignant. In his seminal piece titled 'Is the Criminal Law a Lost Cause?', Mr. Ashworth creates a distinction between regulatory offences and penal offences and exemplifies the same through the functional distinction between a tax and a fine. While the purpose of a tax is primarily regulatory in nature, a fine carries with it an element of censure and stigma. This functional dis-

tinction, Mr. Ashworth proffers, is increasingly being diluted under our legislative frameworks which frequently deploy these elements of censure and stigma to regulatory domains.

Secondly, the Observer Research Foundation's report titled Jailed for Doing Business found that there are more than 26,134 imprisonment clauses in a total of 843 economic legislations, rules and regulations which seek to regulate businesses and economic activities in India. In this light, the number of offences deregulated under the Bill seems to be a mere drop in India's regulatory framework.

Thirdly, the regulatory offences to be considered for 'decriminalisation' need to be prioritised not only from the point of view of the ease of doing business, but also from the points of view of the ills that plague our criminal justice system itself.

Lastly, the Bill conforms to the understanding of the government that decriminalisation should be limited to regulatory

domains. However, the time is now ripe to shift focus to existing penal offences as well. Debates are ongoing about the decriminalisation of several penal offences such as sedition, offences under NDPS Act & UAPA Acts, triple talaq and anti-conversion laws etc. There is an urgent need to assess these offences on a principled basis.

### The way ahead

The intent of the Bill is merely to ensure that imprisonment is replaced with fines for as many offences as possible. The extent to which it succeeds in 'decriminalising' offences, however, is questionable. If these faults are to be rectified, it is pertinent that a more comprehensive exercise is undertaken and that the government prioritises the needs and requirements of the criminal justice system.

*G.S. Bajpai is the Vice-Chancellor at Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab, where Ankit Kaushik is an Assistant Professor*

## THE GIST

▼  
The Jan Vishwas Bill, 2022, (Bill) was tabled in the Parliament with the objective of "decriminalising" 183 offences across 42 legislations and enhancing the ease of living and doing business in India.

▼  
However, the Bill either omits penal provisions or replaces them with fines in legislations such as the Air Act, Environment Protection Act, Forest Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Acts, Cinematograph Act, Patents Act among others.

▼  
An examination of the provisions of the Bill reveals that stress has been on the replacement of imprisonment clauses with fines. This can hardly be termed as 'decriminalisation'

# As courts insist on triple-test rule for OBC quota in polls, State governments push back

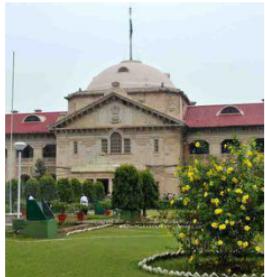
## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Abhinav Lakshman**

NEW DELHI

As the clamour for a caste census grows across India, with several States looking to introduce reservation for the Backward Classes in urban local body polls, the judiciary, over the course of 2022, has established time and again that caste population surveys conducted by the States are not enough to provide for political reservation in local body elections.

The most recent instance of this was when the Allahabad High Court on Tuesday shot down the caste census conducted by the Uttar Pradesh government to enumerate the Other Backward Class (OBC) population across the State, holding that an exercise of “counting of heads” cannot be enough, prompting U.P. Chief Mi-



While notifying the elections, the seats and offices of chairpersons, except those to be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, shall be notified as for general/open category  
**ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT**

nister Yogi Adityanath to say his government would do whatever was required to reserve OBC seats in the local body polls.

### Rapid survey

Within a month of taking office as Chief Minister in his first term, Mr. Adityanath’s BJP-led government had on April 7, 2017 ordered a caste census in the State, issuing directions for a “rapid survey” to count the population of OBCs ward-wise in each municipal corporation, municipal council, and panchayat

area. A similar survey was called for in a June 2022 government order and based on the population, seats were reserved. Similarly, the Bihar government went on to reserve seats for the Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) in its local body polls.

The triple-test requires a State government to set up a dedicated commission for a contemporaneous rigorous empirical inquiry into the nature and implications of backwardness specifically with respect to local bodies; speci-

fy proportion of reservations required for political representation based on the dedicated commission’s recommendation; and ensure total reservations for Scheduled Caste (SC)/ Scheduled Tribe (ST)/ OBC groups do not exceed 50% of the number of total seats.

### Political representation

In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the Allahabad High Court noted that the government’s enumeration exercise had “missed a crucial factor” as it “does not provide for inquiry into political representation of backward class of citizens in municipal bodies” – holding that the dedicated commission must also ascertain under-representation in municipal bodies (if any) and its extent, and reserve seats in accordance.

While shooting down the Bihar government’s notification on reserving seats based on population,

the Patna High Court had made a similar point on distinguishing the social and education backwardness of a group from its political backwardness. Within days of this order in October, the Bihar government re-constituted its Extremely Backward Classes Commission and designated it as the “dedicated commission” to conduct this exercise.

The Commission submitted its report in a month, in favour of reservations and the State Election Commission notified the polls, which are currently under way.

Similarly, after the Supreme Court stopped attempts for reserving seats in local body polls of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, both State governments formed dedicated Commissions to look into this, which favoured quota in its reports – reports that the Supreme Court has accepted for the time being.

# Delegated law should not travel beyond purview of parent Act: SC

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

Delegated legislation, including rules and regulations formed by the State and Central authorities, should not supplant but supplement the parliamentary statute from which it draws power, the Supreme Court held in a judgment.

"If a rule goes beyond the rule-making power conferred by the statute, the same has to be declared invalid. If a rule supplants any provision for which power has not been conferred, it becomes invalid," a Bench of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and J.B. Pardiwala observed.

A delegated power to legislate by making rules or regulations cannot be exercised so as to bring into existence substantive rights, obligations or disabilities not contemplated by the provisions of the parent statute, Justice Pardiwala, who authored the judgment, wrote.

"Delegated legislation should not travel beyond the purview of the parent Act. If it does, it is *ultra vires* and cannot be given any effect," he said.

The court laid down the law in an appeal filed by the Kerala State Electricity Board against a High Court decision which upheld Regulation 153(15) of the Kerala Electricity Supply Code, 2014. Regulation 153 (15) provided that 'unauthorised additional load' in the same premises and under the same tariff shall not be reckoned as 'unauthorised use of electricity' except in cases of consumers billed on the basis of the connected load. It reversed the High Court decision while holding that the Regulation was inconsistent with Section 126(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003. Section 126 of the 2003 Act was enacted with a specific purpose to restrict such unauthorised consumption of electricity.

# After 2020 COVID blip, road fatalities on the rise

Number of road accident deaths in 2021 was 1.9% more than in 2019, shows government report; road accident severity, or the number of people killed per 100 accidents, rose from 33.7 to 37.3

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

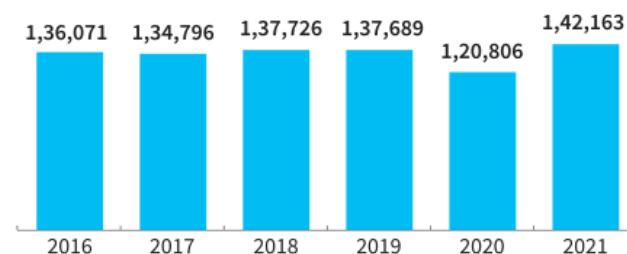
Fatalities due to road accidents resumed their upward trajectory, after a rare decline in 2020 due to restrictions on movement during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Road accident deaths increased by 1.9% in 2021 from the 2019 figure, show the Road Transport Ministry's annual report released on Wednesday.

A total of 4,12,432 road accidents were reported in the country last year, claiming 1,53,972 lives and causing injuries to 3,84,448 people, say the Road Accidents in India-2021 report. These translate into an average of 1,130 accidents and 422 deaths every day or 47 accidents and 18 deaths every hour.

Young adults in the 18-45 age group accounted for 67.6% of victims during 2021. People in the work-

## Road tragedies

The number of fatal accidents has remained over 1.3 lakh every year over the past few years, except in 2020 because of lockdowns brought on by the pandemic



Source: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

ing age group of 18-60 made up 84.5% of total road accident fatalities. Those under 18 totalled 5% of all road accident deaths, and those above 60 accounted for 7.6%.

Road accident severity – the number of persons killed per 100 accidents – increased from 33.7 in 2019 to 37.3 in 2021.

The most number of fatalities was in the "hit from behind" category of accidents, which accounted for 18.6% of the total road acci-

dent deaths. A close second was death due to "head-on collision", which contributed to 17.7% of the total deaths. The other major types of collision which caused deaths were "hit and run" (16.8%), and "hit from side" (11.9%).

Of deaths from violation of traffic rules, speeding was a major killer, accounting for 69.6% of the fatalities, followed by driving on the wrong side of the road (5.2%). Use of mobile phones contributed to

1.9% of the total road fatalities and jumping traffic signal lights contributed to 0.5%.

Among road users, the most impacted were two-wheeler users, who accounted for 40.7% of the deaths, followed by pedestrians (16.9%), those travelling in cars or taxis (16.4%), users of trucks and lorries (8.9%), and others (7.6%).

Out of 1,42,163 fatal accidents reported in 2021, 50,953 (35.8%) were on National Highways, 34,946 (24.6%) were on State Highways and 56,264 (39.6%) were on other roads.

Uttar Pradesh accounted for the largest share of fatalities at 13.8%, followed by Tamil Nadu (10%), Maharashtra (8.8%), Madhya Pradesh (7.8%), and Rajasthan (6.5%). Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have seen a rise in their share of fatalities from the 2019 figure.

# Laboured wages

Any delay in funds to be paid to States for MGNREGS payments is unethical

A testy exchange in the Rajya Sabha between the Minister of State for Rural Development, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, and the Trinamool Congress MP, Jawhar Sircar, on the withholding of funds for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in West Bengal laid bare a key implementation issue – wage delays. A report by the non-profit organisation LibTech India found that ₹2,744 crore was still due to workers for work done since December 26, 2021. The delay in the payment, which is contrary to what is stated in Section 3 of the NREG Act, has resulted in a drop in the number of households working under the scheme in the State – from 77 lakh during the pandemic years to 16 lakh in the current financial year. The current number falls short of the 49.25 lakh households which availed the scheme in the last pre-COVID-19 year as well. The Union Government in its response suggested that funds have been blocked only in West Bengal for “non-compliance with the directives of the Central government” and this pertains to prior fund misuse, but the Trinamool Congress government’s response is legitimate. The State has answered queries related to the misuse and the blocking of funds to workers; the fact that misuse has reportedly covered only a fraction of the grants suggests that workers are being unduly punished.

Wage delays have been a chronic problem with MGNREGS, which, beyond being a form of insurance for the poorest rural households, was a boon during the pandemic years, giving succour not only to such households but also to migrant workers from urban areas as alternative employment. Earlier this year, the delays in funds disbursement to the States were on account of procedural delays and an overhauling of the Public Financial Management System (Finance Ministry). This should not be a problem if the Union government sets aside adequate funds at the beginning of the financial year. While an emphasis on reducing misuse is necessary – in particular, ensuring that the scheme is put into use by actually undertaking public works – the misplaced reliance on technocratic approaches has stymied its implementation. The Government has now made digital capture of MGNREGS attendance mandatory at work sites, despite issues such as the lack of technical support, the necessity to own a smartphone, and workable Internet connections at the sites not having been fully resolved. A scheme such as MGNREGS needs to evolve while keeping its core idea of a demand-driven work allocation intact. Treating it as a burden will only hurt genuine beneficiaries.

# What is the proposal to ban the sale of single cigarettes?

Ban of sale of loose cigarettes and increase in taxes of all tobacco-related products were some of the recommendations by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare

## Saptaparno Ghosh

### The story so far:

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare, in its latest report about cancer management, prevention and diagnosis, recommended that the government institute a ban on the sale of single sticks of cigarettes. It also recommended that the government increase taxes on all tobacco products and utilise the acquired revenue for cancer prevention and awareness.

### What are the proposals?

Broadly, the measures aim to curb consumption as well as the accessibility of tobacco products. The report cites the National Health Policy's (2017) endeavour for a relative reduction in current tobacco use by 30% by 2025 and says it is

imperative that the government take effective measures to contain the sale of tobacco products. To this effect, it recommends that the government prohibit the sale of single sticks of cigarettes and suggests the abolition of all designated smoking areas in airports, hotels, and restaurants in addition to encouraging a smoke-free policy in organisations. The Committee also found that India has the lowest prices for tobacco products and thus, it must look to increase taxes on them.

These measures flow from the observation that oral cancer accounts for the highest proportion of cancer cases in the country.

Additionally, the committee also sought a ban on gutka and pan masala alongside a prohibition on their direct and indirect advertisement. This is based on the observation that, in India, more than 80%

of tobacco consumption is in the form of chewing tobacco, aggressively marketed as a mouth freshener.

**Why focus on single-stick cigarettes?**  
Single sticks are more economical to acquire than a full pack of cigarettes. This may particularly appeal to adolescents and youth who may have limited money in hand. Single sticks are also preferred by people who may want to take them up for experimentation and have not started smoking on a regular basis.

A ban on single-stick sales would compel a potential consumer to buy the entire pack which may not be particularly economical, thus curbing potential experimentation and the scope for regular intake. Moreover, a potential ban would also mean that the consumer would have to carry around the packet. The World Health Organization (WHO)

has observed that all forms of tobacco are harmful, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. It also states that smoking cigarettes is the most common way of tobacco use worldwide. Moreover, the medical journal *The Lancet* noted in an editorial in June 2020, that by 2030, 7 million annual deaths from smoking are expected to be from low and middle-income countries.

Single-stick sales, owing to their easier accessibility and affordability, can also work as a disincentive to quit smoking. Nicotine in tobacco products is highly addictive and without cessation support only 4% of users who attempt to quit tobacco consumption will succeed, according to the WHO.

### How effective can the ban be?

Cyril Alexander, State Convenor of the Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Tobacco Control (TNPFTC) told *The Hindu* that notwithstanding the proposed move would reduce consumption and sales, the government must also consider instituting vendor licensing.

According to Mr. Alexander, in the absence of a vendor licensing regime, the ban on single sticks might not be very effective. "If you allow lakhs and lakhs of shops to sell tobacco and then implement the ban on the sale of single sticks of cigarettes, how would you enforce (the ban)?" he asks.

## THE GIST

According to *The Lancet*, about 7 million annual deaths can be expected by 2030 from low and middle-income countries due to smoking.

Single sticks, being more economical, can appeal to youngsters who may have limited money in hand. Single sticks are also preferred by people who are yet to pick up the habit but want to try it out.

A ban on single-stick sales would compel a potential consumer to buy the entire pack which may not be particularly economical, thus curbing potential experimentation and the scope for regular intake.

# Turning tide

Sliding global demand is hurting manufacturing exports already

**I**ndia's goods exports rebounded from a nearly 17% dip in October to a mild 0.6% up-tick in November. While the value of exports recovered to \$32 billion from \$29.8 billion in October, it is still significantly below the \$39 billion averaged between April and September. Imports growth moderated to 5.4% with the value of shipments slipping to \$55.9 billion – a level last seen in February 2022, which was followed by seven months of import bills of around \$60 billion. The merchandise trade deficit eased below \$25 billion for the first time in five months. The easing of some commodities' prices may help curb the import bill and deficit to some extent, but this could cut both ways as the value of some exports that boomed because of global price trends earlier, will also decline. A part of the import bill dip was triggered by lower non-oil cargo, signalling slowing domestic demand, but non-oil exports' performance is a greater worry. Their share in exports growth has been shrinking since June, with the contraction accelerating for many sectors from September to November – engineering goods that drove much of India's record \$422 billion goods exports in 2021-22, contracted 11.3% while textiles fell a steeper 25%.

December's pending festive orders may still lift export numbers month-on-month, but the onset of 2023 would spell greater pressures for India's trade story, with key markets heading into a recession. Having grown 11.1% in the first eight months of 2022-23, goods exports could still fall 2.3% over the full year, a CARE Ratings research paper cautioned on Tuesday. While the World Trade Organization expects global goods trade to grow just 1% in 2023, CARE reckons India's exports may rise a meagre 1.5% in 2023-24. Services exports and remittance inflows may cushion India's current account deficit from the goods trade imbalance and restrict the economy's external vulnerabilities, but policy makers need to focus on ensuring a soft landing for factories in export-intensive sectors that are also massive employers so that the global gloom does not hit domestic sentiment. In recent weeks, the Government belatedly scrapped the export duty on steel and iron ore, that was hurting engineering exports too, and brought them under a tax refund scheme with thus-far excluded sectors like drugs and chemicals. Keeping an eye on market realities to respond deftly to emerging challenges is vital for Indian exporters to sustain through the coming turmoil and perhaps, even expand their share in the global trade pie. Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh and China saw their share rise even when global trade growth itself slowed in the years before COVID-19. India too, should aspire to emerge stronger from the brewing storm.

# 'FDI chasing services sector despite manufacturing push'

Trend likely because doing business in the services sector is less complicated than in manufacturing in India, says Ind-Ra; 'bulk of FDI in manufacturing not fresh investments'

**Press Trust of India**  
MUMBAI

**D**espite the Centre's high-octane push for manufacturing through the 'Make in India' initiative, foreign investors continue to chase bets in the services sector, India Ratings and Research said on Wednesday.

It also said a bulk of the foreign direct investment (FDI) in manufacturing was not greenfield or fresh investments. "Despite the government's effort to attract more investments in the manufacturing sector

## Servicing trade

Services FDI rose to \$153.01 bn between April 2014 and March 2022, from \$80.51 bn in April 2000-March 2014

- FDI in manufacturing grew slower in the same period to \$94.32 bn, from \$77.11 bn
- Within services, trading, telecom, banking/insurance, IT/business outsourcing and hotels/tourism have been favourites
- Computer software and hardware did well; sector saw more traction after PLI roll-out with Apple, Samsung, Flextronics, and Nokia announcing large investments



through 'Make in India' campaign, the FDI inflow is still tilted in favour of the services sector," it said.

"This could be because

doing business in the services sector is less complicated than doing business in the manufacturing sector in India." It added that

services FDI rose to \$153.01 billion between April 2014 and March 2022, from \$80.51 billion between April 2000 and March 2014, while manufacturing grew slower to \$94.32 billion from \$77.11 billion.

Within services, trading, telecom, banking/insurance, IT/BPO and tourism were favourites.

Computer software and hardware have done well, and saw further traction after the roll-out of production-linked incentives, with Apple, Samsung, Flextronics, and Nokia announcing large investments in India.



Jyotiraditya Scindia

## Civil aviation seeing strong V-shaped recovery, says Scindia

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

The country's civil aviation sector is witnessing a very strong V-shaped recovery with encouraging domestic passenger numbers, and the growth will continue in the coming years, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Wednesday.

After being significantly impacted by the pandemic, the daily domestic air passenger traffic has been above the four-lakh mark for the past few weeks.

On the congestion at airports that has now eased, he said efforts had been made to ensure that operators put in place steps that would allow decongestion.

About the current coronavirus situation and its shadow on the aviation sector, Mr. Scindia said COVID was always a concern.

"The very fact that we have very high COVID numbers across the world today from China to South Korea to Japan to European countries, it is certainly a concern," the Minister said in an interview.

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

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

### General Studies Paper III

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

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

#### General Studies Paper IV

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