



VEDHIK

DAILY NEWS **ANALYSIS**

14 - JAN - 2023

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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Jaishankar to visit Sri Lanka, may discuss debt crisis

Suhasini Haidar
Meera Srinivasan
NEW DELHI/COLOMBO

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will travel to Sri Lanka next week, sources told *The Hindu*. This will be his first trip to the country since President Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn-in last July after protests forced out the previous Rajapaksa regime.

Officials said that while a full review of bilateral ties is on the agenda, the visit comes amid efforts by the Sri Lankan government to get “written financial assurances” from their closest and biggest creditors – India and China – on restructuring their debt. This is needed to make progress

on their bailout plan being discussed with the International Monetary Fund.

Chinese visit

Mr. Jaishankar’s two-day visit to Colombo, scheduled for January 19-20, will follow a visit by a ministerial delegation of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The visits, coming back-to-back, are crucial for Colombo to avail itself of the \$2.9 billion IMF package under its Extended Fund Facility. The Sri Lankan government has said that it hopes to borrow more money once the IMF programme kicks in, to set its economy on a path to recovery following last year’s crushing meltdown. China, Japan, and India are



S. Jaishankar

Sri Lanka’s three largest bilateral creditors, and Colombo is counting on their cooperation for economic revival.

On Friday, the Chinese Embassy in Colombo announced that a “high-level delegation of the CPC led by the International Department Vice Minister

Chen Zhou will visit Sri Lanka 14-18 January, the first official visit of the CPC to the island in the new year of 2023 and after its 20th National Congress.”

India has been involved closely in assisting Sri Lanka’s economic recovery programme after a near-debt default last year, and has been coordinating with other partners like the US and Japan, both on a bilateral level and at the Quad’s meetings, in order to find ways to help Sri Lanka overcome its financial crisis. However, strategic ties hit a block over the Sri Lankan government’s decision to allow a Chinese satellite tracking vessel into Hambantota port last August, a development that both In-

dia and the US formally protested against.

In another indicator of the growing faultlines in Sri Lanka, U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung told the BBC news service on Thursday that China should not play “spoiler”, and that Beijing must provide the necessary financing assurances without delay “for the sake of the Sri Lankan people”.

Ferry connectivity

Mr. Jaishankar will also discuss trade and transit ties with India’s neighbour. New Delhi and Colombo are in talks to enhance ferry connectivity, following the restart of Chennai-Jaffna flights last month. The Wickremesinghe govern-

ment has committed to resuming negotiations on the stalled Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement as well.

Mr. Jaishankar’s visit comes even as Mr. Wickremesinghe is holding talks with Sri Lanka’s Tamil political leadership on a durable political solution. The Tamil parties have expressed concerns over the absence of any tangible action on their demands pertaining to land grabs in the north and east, release of political prisoners and answers to families of disappeared persons. These are issues that the External Affairs Minister had raised last year, in talks with the then-Rajapaksa administration.

Bound supremacy

Parliamentary sovereignty isn't undone by the basic structure doctrine

It is fairly well-known that parliamentary legislation is subject to two limitations under the Constitution of India. One is by judicial review, or the power of constitutional courts to review legislation for possible violation of any fundamental right. Another is that no amendment to the Constitution should have the effect of destroying any of its basic features. While the first limitation is set out in Article 13, under which laws inconsistent with or in derogation of fundamental rights are void, the second limitation is based on the 'basic structure' doctrine evolved by the Supreme Court. Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar's remarks questioning the basic structure doctrine propounded in the landmark *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973) does not reflect the correct position of law. In his view, the basic structure doctrine has usurped parliamentary sovereignty and goes against the democratic imperative that the elected legislature should reign supreme. His particular concern seems justified: that the Supreme Court prevented the National Judicial Appointments Commission, a body to appoint judges to the superior courts in the country, from coming into existence by striking down the relevant amendment to the Constitution and a parliamentary law to give effect to it. But it is difficult not to see his attack on the basic structure doctrine as part of the current dispensation's tirade against the judiciary and its grievance that it does not have enough say in the appointment of judges.

The idea that the basic structure doctrine undermines parliamentary sovereignty is simply wrong. Parliament is sovereign in its domain, but it is still bound by the limitations imposed by the Constitution. Mr. Dhankhar seems to have a problem with any sort of limitation on Parliament's jurisdiction to amend the Constitution. Surely, he could not have forgotten that the basic structure doctrine had helped save the Constitution from being undermined through the misuse of parliamentary majority. The main purpose of the doctrine is to ensure that some fundamental features of the Constitution are not legislated out of existence. It has been invoked to strike down amendments only in a few cases, but many others have survived basic structure challenges. Parliamentary majority is transient, but essential features of the Constitution such as the rule of law, parliamentary form of government, separation of powers, the idea of equality, and free and fair elections ought to be perennially protected from legislative excess. It may be open to a new Constituent Assembly to come up with another constitution that changes these fundamental concepts, but a legislature formed under the current Constitution cannot be allowed to change its core identity.

More than just an address

The first session of every new Parliament in the United Kingdom requires the election of the Speaker to be completed and members of both Houses to take oath. Neither House of Parliament can proceed with any public business in any further session unless it is opened either by the King himself or by Lords Commissioners acting on his behalf. The King's speech is thus the formal beginning of each new session of Parliament and states the government's policy and the intended programme of business for the forthcoming session. The King's speech is prepared by the incumbent government and a copy of it is given to him by the Lord Chancellor.

A special address

As India adopted the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy, the Constituent Assembly decided, on May 18, 1949, to adopt this practice. Article 87 of the Indian Constitution requires the President to make a special address to both Houses of Parliament assembled on the commencement of the first session of each year. The President has to inform Parliament of the causes of its summons. Similarly, Article 176 requires the Governor to make a special address at the first session of each year of every State Legislative Assembly and to both Houses wherever the State also has a Legislative Council. The language of these provisions were borrowed from the rules of the House of Commons.

Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking in the Lok Sabha



Arvind P. Datar
is a practicing advocate at the Madras High Court



Rahul Unnikrishnan
is a practicing advocate at the Madras High Court

The Governor is an elder statesman who brings a sense of gravitas to this high office

on February 22, 1960, stated that the President's address is nothing but a statement of policy of the government. He observed: "If the President's address has anything wrong in it or objectionable in it, it is the government to blame not the President, and it is open to hon. Members to criticise or condemn government because there is some such statement in it which they disapprove of".

The Calcutta High Court, while interpreting this article in *Syed Abdul Mansur Habibullah v. The Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly* (1966), held that the special address is not an idle or ceremonial formality. It keeps the members informed about the executive policies and legislative programme of the State government. The High Court further observed that the non-delivery of the special address hampers legislative debates and budgetary criticisms.

Thus, both in the U.K. and in India, it is a time-honoured constitutional convention that the King or the President or the Governor must read out the exact text of the speech or special address which informs the nation or the State of the policies that an elected government intends to pursue. There has never been an incident of the monarch in the U.K. departing from the official text of his speech. The Governor of Tamil Nadu, R.N. Ravi, made constitutional history in the State by omitting certain paragraphs and departing from the official text of his special address at the opening of the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu for 2023.

It is interesting that during the Constituent Assembly debates, Professor K.T. Shah proposed an amendment to Article 87 giving discretion to the President to also make an address on "other particular issues of policy he deems suitable for such address". This amendment was rejected as B.R. Ambedkar pointed out that the President, under Article 86, had the right to address either House or both Houses of Parliament together and Parliament had to assemble for this purpose. Similar power was given to the Governor under Article 175. Thus, when there is an independent power provided under Article 175, it is a serious impropriety for any Governor (or even the President) to omit several paragraphs from the speech prepared by the incumbent government.

The Supreme Court has held that constitutional conventions are as much a part of the Constitution as its written text. And it is well-settled that constitutional morality consists of not only adherence to the written text of the Constitution but also to constitutional conventions. These conventions fill the interstices of a written Constitution and enable effective coordination between the legislature, executive and the judiciary.

Article 361 of the Constitution gives the Governor complete immunity from any legal action because our founding fathers hoped that Governors would maintain the highest standards of rectitude and propriety. It is disturbing that serious breaches of constitutional conventions continue to be made by Governors in States ruled by Opposition parties. The swearing-in of a Chief Minister early morning, the continued friction now between the Governor and the ruling party in Kerala and formerly in West Bengal, the omission to invite the single largest party to form a government in Manipur and Goa, the deliberate delay in providing assent to bills passed by the elected legislature in Tamil Nadu are some disturbing examples that have not met any censure.

The role of the Governor

The special address of the Governor is an important constitutional duty, which is performed with the aid and advise of the Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head. The constitutional role of the Governor is that of an elder statesman who brings a sense of gravitas to this high office, and by his oath, must preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law. The residents of Raj Bhavans are expected to be above party politics and should not hamper the functioning of a duly elected State government. It is a tribute to our Constitution that it continues to be the steel-frame of India's republican democracy and has survived for over 70 years. But there is always the danger that this frame can be corroded and destroyed by short-sighted constitutional amendments and by repeated breaches of constitutional conventions. And the even greater danger is that no one can predict when the tipping point will come.



BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'All Sikkimese women must be allowed to get I-T relief'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday, in a judgment, held that exclusion of Sikkimese women who marry non-Sikkimese men after April 1, 2008 from exemptions under the Income Tax Act is unconstitutional and amounts to gender discrimination.

“The discrimination is based on gender, which is wholly violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution. It is to be noted that there is no disqualification for a Sikkim man, who marries a non-Sikkimese after April 1, 2008,” Justice M.R. Shah observed in his opinion.

Justice B.V. Nagarathna, in a separate opinion, agreed that “there cannot be a discrimination vis-à-vis Sikkimese women marrying a non-Sikkimese individual, whether an Indian citizen or a foreigner, that too, on or after April 1, 2008”.

The top court made the ruling in a case related to an appeal filed by the Association of Old Settlers of Sikkim.

Kollam is first Constitution literate dist.



Shanta placing the Preamble at her home in Kulathupuzha, Kollam. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Navamy Sudhish
KOLLAM

Shanta hardly knew that liberty of expression or equality of status was her right. Once enlightened, the 63-year-old has no doubt where to place the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

In her modest two-room house in rural Kulathupuzha, the preamble shares a wall with gods.

A Bhagavatham reciter

by profession, she is one among thousands of neo-literates who have been educated on the Indian Constitution as part of The Citizen, a Constitution literacy campaign jointly launched by the Kollam district panchayat, District Planning Committee and the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA).

As part of the ambitious campaign, around 16.3 lakh people in the district above the age of 10 have

been educated on various aspects of the Constitution and the strenuous process involved 2,200 trainers called 'senators'.

During the seven-month campaign, the senators visited schools, offices, auto stands and tribal councils to spread awareness.

Kollam will be officially declared India's first Constitution literate district by Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday.

Marriage of minor girls: SC to check legality of personal law


A Bench led by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud issues formal notice on a plea filed by the NCPCR; the panel questions personal laws overriding statutes like POCSO, Prohibition of Child Marriage Acts

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday decided to examine whether girls as young as 15 years can enter into wedlock on the basis of custom or personal law when such marriages constitute an offence in statutory law.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud issued formal notice on the petition filed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) against a recent order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court that a girl, on attaining puberty or the age of 15 years and above, could be married on the basis of Muslim personal law, irrespective of the provisions of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO).

The Supreme Court said the High Court order

 Can personal law and custom be pleaded in the face of statutes such as POCSO and the Indian Penal Code, which make such marriages an offence?

TUSHAR MEHTA
Solicitor General

would not act as a judicial precedent for other courts.

Appearing for NCPCR, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that “girls as young as 14 and 15 are being married. Can personal law and custom be pleaded in the face of statutes such as POCSO and the Indian Penal Code, which make such marriages an offence?”

The Kerala High Court had recently observed that provisions of POCSO would apply if the bride or groom was a minor, irrespective of the validity or



otherwise of the marriage.

The NCPCR, through advocate Swarupama Chaturvedi, has contended that laws such as POCSO and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act are secular in nature and should apply to all sections of the society.

Raising age of marriage

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 has sought to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, to increase the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.

In December 2022, the top court had asked the government to respond to a separate petition filed by the National Commission for Women (NCW) to make the minimum age of marriage for Muslim women on par with persons belonging to other faiths. NCW, like the NCPCR, had raised the question whether personal law could override statutory provisions of POCSO, etc.

The NCW had argued that the practice of marrying below the age of 18 would expose Muslim women to abuse and harassment, and further said that it was arbitrary and discriminatory.



Explained | Is raising marriage age enough to help girls?
bit.ly/raisingmarriageage

The buck stops with govt. to end hate speech: SC


Govt. should step in when religious freedom, harmony and orderly progress are gravely affected, says court and flags hate speech on TV where anchors have become tools to peddle 'agendas'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said the “buck ultimately stops with the government” to clamp down on hate speech and hate crimes, as they are offences committed on society.

The government agreed that hate could not hide behind the colour of any religion.

“We would not have liked the government to come in at all, but in certain areas when religious freedom, harmony and orderly progress are gravely affected, it has to intervene... Today what are we fighting about? We have more important things to achieve as a nation – people are starving without jobs,” Justice K.M. Joseph observed. Justice B.V. Naga-

 They [anchors/panellists] have to be very clear that they cannot go on TV and speak their minds whichever way they want... That is not the exercise of freedom... Freedom comes with responsibility

JUSTICE K.M. JOSEPH
Supreme Court



rathna was also part of the Bench that was hearing a batch of petitions seeking curbs on hate speech.

The remarks from the Bench came after Uttar Pradesh informed the court that it had registered 580 cases of hate speech in 2021-2022. Of these, 160 were *suo motu* registered by the police. Uttarakhand said it had filed 118 cases.

“This [hate speech] is a complete menace, nothing short of it,” Justice Joseph said. During the hearing,

the court highlighted the problem of hate speech on television. It said TV channels and their anchors have become tools to peddle particular “agendas”, creating divisiveness and violent instincts in the society to win their TRP (television rating point) wars.

‘Media not balanced’

“We require a free and balanced media. But they are not balanced... We have got TV for decades now, but you [government] have

List steps taken, Delhi Police told

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court directed Delhi Police to file an affidavit listing the steps taken to probe cases of hate speech in the capital. » **PAGE 8**

not thought of anything for TV. Therefore it has become a free-for-all,” Justice Nagarathna said.

Asking if any anchor had been “taken off air” to send a message against triggering hate or bias on TV, the court said “if freedom is exercised with an agenda, you are not actually serving the people but some other cause. Then you have to be dealt with”.

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'The buck stops with govt. to end hate speech'

The court said that the anchors and the editorial heads of the channels decided the content, adding that it was also dictated by the "money" behind the channels.

Justice Joseph, who said he was speaking for himself, said that he found it denigrating how TV channels resorted to "name-calling". He referred to the man accused of urinating on a fellow passenger in an Air India flight in this regard. "The type of words used against him... He is an under-trial. Please do not denigrate anyone. Dignity is also part of Article 21 (right to life)," said Justice Joseph.

Justice Nagarathna said that the exercise of free speech by one could not violate the right to dignity and free speech of others.

"They [anchors/panellists] have to be very clear that they cannot go on TV and speak their minds whichever way they want... That is not the exercise of freedom," Justice Joseph observed.

The court referred to TV debates dissolving into slanging matches where some invitees were muted. Justice Joseph said that such actions affected the viewers' right to be informed.

'Media must self-regulate'

Additional Solicitor General K.M. Nataraj said that the government intervened against the media only in "exceptional circumstances". The onus was on the media to self-regulate and exercise prior restraint. The government was considering legislation and even "comprehensive" amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure to address the issues highlighted by the court, he said. Meanwhile, individuals wronged could avail of either the mechanisms under the Indian Penal Code.

India's trade deficit with China races beyond \$100 bn

India's 2022 imports from neighbour rise 21% but exports to China contract to \$17.5 billion; China's total foreign trade for the year surge to a record high, increasing by 7.7% to \$6.25 trillion, data show

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

India's bilateral trade with China reached a record \$135.98 billion in 2022, Chinese Customs data showed on Friday, driven by surging Indian imports of Chinese goods that were up by more than 21% last year.

India's exports to China, however, fell in 2022, driving an already significant trade deficit beyond the \$100 billion-mark for the first time. Figures released by the General Administration of Customs (GAC) in Beijing showed two-way

Trade imbalance

Chinese customs data on Friday showed bilateral trade had climbed 8.4% last year to \$135.98 billion



- India's imports accounted for \$118.5 billion of 2-way trade, up from \$97.5 billion the previous year
- India's exports to China fell from \$28.1 billion to \$17.48 billion
- Trade deficit widened to \$101.02 billion, up by 45%, from the \$69.4 billion seen in 2021

trade was up by 8.4% last year to \$135.98 billion, with India's imports accounting for \$118.5 billion, up from \$97.5 billion.

India's exports to China

fell from \$28.1 billion to \$17.48 billion. The trade deficit reached \$101.02 billion, up by 45%, from \$69.4 billion in 2021.

China's total foreign

trade in 2022 hit a record high, up 7.7% to \$6.25 trillion. Exports climbed 10.5%. Trade with ASEAN, China's biggest trading partner, increased 11.2% to \$975.34 billion. The EU ranked second among China's trading partners, with trade up 2.4% at \$847.32 billion, followed by the U.S., with trade up 0.6% to \$759.42 billion.

For India, trade last year surpassed what was a record year in 2021, on account of demand recovery in India, spurring imports of intermediate goods, and of new categories such as medical supplies.

Rise in govt. capital spending pushes up investments by 53%

Seeing a surge

Total investment projects in the first nine months of FY23 have crossed ₹21 lakh crore, 53.2% higher than FY22. The share of government projects increased in FY23, by around 7% points compared to FY22, while that of private sector declined

Ownership	Q1-Q3 FY22	Q1-Q3 FY23
Government	28.56%	35.70%
Central govt.	14.21%	16.40%
State govt.	14.34%	19.30%
Private sector	71.44%	64.30%
Private (Indian)	62.50%	54.66%
Private (Foreign)	8.95%	9.64%
Total investments	13,80,540 crore	21,14,773 crore



Vikas Dhoot

NEW DELHI

A sharp 61.2% sequential increase in capital spending by the Central and State governments propped up overall fresh investment plans announced in the third quarter (Q3) of 2022-23 to ₹7.1 lakh crore, even though private sector investments

dropped 41% from ₹6.31 lakh crore in Q2 to ₹3.71 lakh crore between October and December 2022.

Despite a 15.5% quarter-on-quarter decline in overall new investment plans in Q3, investment projects in the first nine months have crossed ₹21 lakh crore.

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Rise in capital spending pushes up investments

This is 53.2% higher than 2021-22 and almost 2.5 times the investment plans announced in the pre-COVID year of 2019, as per the latest projects survey conducted by investment monitoring firm Projects Today.

The number of new projects announced in 2022-23 is 7,555, a tad lower than the 7,978 projects in the first nine months of 2021-22. But big-ticket private investments and higher capex outlays from government agencies lifted the total investment to ₹21,14,773 crore compared with ₹13,80,540 crore over the corresponding period a year earlier.

Private sector investment project numbers dropped from 3,585 projects in April to December 2021 to 2,787 in 2022-23 so far, but the value of investments was ₹13.6 lakh crore, almost 38% higher than 2021-22.

“The fall in the number of private projects shows that a number of private companies, despite experiencing high-capacity utilisation and having enough resources, are adopting a wait-and-watch policy to unravel their capex plans. Rising input costs, hardening interest rates and the slowdown expected in developed economies are the headwinds making mid-size Indian companies go slow on their investment plans,” Projects Today CEO and director Shashikant Hegde told *The Hindu*.

However, the scale of the total fresh capex commitments made during Q1-Q3 this year should not only raise the confidence level of foreign investors but also make the mid-size Indian companies, who are currently not investing heavily, line up their investment plans in 2023-24, he pointed out.

In the first nine months of 2019-20, new investments worth ₹8.68 lakh crore had been announced, with the private sector accounting for less than half of the outlays. In Q1 to Q3 of 2021-22, private sector investments constituted 71.4% of total investments, with their share declining slightly to 64.3% in 2022-23 as government capex has nearly doubled year-on-year to ₹7.55 lakh crore.

Alappuzha sees a decline in visiting waterbirds

Sam Paul A.
ALAPPUZHA

A shift in migration patterns of waterbirds appears to be taking place as revealed by a recent survey conducted in the northern parts of Alappuzha. A detailed assessment of the survey, conducted as part of the Asian Waterbird Census 2023, shows that the population of some migratory waterbirds, especially duck species, visiting the region are falling.

The survey, jointly organised by the Social Forestry wing of the Forest Department and Birders Ezhupunna, a birdwatching group, recorded 15,335 birds of 117 species. Last year, the survey sighted some 9,500 birds. Though



Winged visitors: (From left) Little cormorant, Oriental darter, Cattle egret and Spot-billed pelican sighted during the Asian Waterbird Census 2023. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

at a glance the number of birds sighted in the region has recorded an increase, birders say it does not reflect the reality of bird migration to the region.

“Last year, we conducted a bird survey at seven places. This time, the census was held at 13 locations in 12 local bodies. Going through the details, we can say the number of migratory birds visiting the region

is actually on the decline,” says Sumesh B., president, Birders Ezhupunna.

Climate change impact

The most shocking aspect was that duck species such as Northern shoveler, Common teal and Eurasian wigeon, sighted in the previous surveys, were totally missing this time around. “Climate change has affected the number of birds vis-

iting the region. However, the precise impact of climate change on bird migration and the environment can only be known after conducting more studies and analysing the results of bird census in the coming years,” says G. Anilkumar, joint secretary, Birders Ezhupunna.

As many as 50 birders from different parts of the State took part in the cen-

sus. They observed 68 bird species at the Chembakasseri wetlands in Pattanakad.

Reports to local bodies

As many as 3,838 Lesser whistling ducks were sighted during the survey, followed by Whiskered tern (1,419), Little cormorant (1,106), Indian pond heron (998), Grey-headed swamphen (820), Barn swallow (830), Cotton pygmy goose (657) and Little egret (526).

Organisers of the survey are in the process of submitting the bird census reports to respective local bodies. The survey was inaugurated by K. Saji, deputy conservator (social forestry), Alappuzha, on January 8. A seminar was also held.

'PM SVANidhi has aided over 9,000 street food vendors'

More than nine thousand street food vendors have been onboard on food delivery platforms like Swiggy and Zomato as part of the Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme, making a wider market accessible to them, Union Minister for Urban Affairs Hardip Singh Puri has said. The total sales by these food vendors on these platforms till January 9, 2023, has been ₹21.93 crore. Mr. Puri said that in the past two years, more than 40.07 lakh loans worth ₹4,606.36 crore has been disbursed to 45.32 lakh beneficiaries under the scheme.

Modi flags off world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Dibrugarh

This cruise will put Indian tourism destinations on the global map, says Prime Minister, launching the three-deck vessel *MV Ganga Vilas* that is set to cover a distance of 3,200 km in 51 days

The Hindu Bureau

LUCKNOW

P rime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday flagged off the world's longest river cruise – *MV Ganga Vilas* – and inaugurated the tent city at Varanasi. Mr. Modi, who joined the function from New Delhi through video conferencing, also laid the foundation stones for many development schemes and inaugurated projects worth more than ₹1,000 crore for Varanasi.

The longest river cruise from Kashi to Dibrugarh is starting from today, putting Indian tourism destinations on the global tourism map, the Prime Minister said. “Our country is entering into a robust phase of tourism. With a growing global profile, curiosity about India is also increasing,” he said.

“With the tent city, tou-



Set for sail: People board the river cruise *MV Ganga Vilas* after it was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PTI

rists and devotees coming to Kashi now have an incredible means of accommodation,” he added.

An all-rounder

MV Ganga Vilas is the first indigenously made cruise vessel in India. It has three decks, 18 suites on board with a capacity of 36 tourists, with all the modern

amenities. It will cover a distance of 3,200 km in roughly 51 days reaching Assam's Dibrugarh through Bangladesh.

Built with a unique design and a futuristic vision, the *MV Ganga Vilas* will meander across various prominent destinations that lie along the Ganga and Hooghly. The cruise

will pass through 25 different river streams.

The cruise journey is going to bring many spiritual, multinational and natural experiences as it will cover destinations like Kashi, Patna Sahib, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Dhaka and the Sundarbans, pointed out Mr. Modi.

“Those seeking spirituality will cover destinations like Kashi, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Patna Sahib and those wanting to witness the natural diversity will cover destinations like Sundarbans and the forests of Assam,” the Prime Minister said.

In his address, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath dubbed the launch of the cruise as the start of a “new era of tourism” in Kashi. “Uttar Pradesh expresses gratitude to the Prime Minister for connecting Kashi with the eastern port,” he said.

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

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

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