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## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## SC RAPS THE CENTRE AND MANIPUR



*“ There is a great need in Manipur to administer a healing touch; to restore a sense of faith in the administration because the violence is continuing unabated. The highest court has a deep concern and will send such officers and judges, who are not politically aligned, to give us a dispassionate view of what is happening on the ground in Manipur... We have to rebuild lives in Manipur ”.*

- D Y Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

A three-judge Supreme Court Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud directed submission of a

summary report of “approximately 6,000 First Information Reports [FIRs] registered on cases of murder, rape, arson, crimes against women, and burning of villages, homes and places of worship by the Manipur government during the ethnic clashes in the State.

The court expressed shock over the delay of 14 days to register even a “zero FIR” on the sexual assault and gang rape of two women in Thoubal district on May 4. The video went viral on July 19 and the Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance of it on July 20. The case was transferred to the police station on June 21.

The court listed the case for 2 p.m. on Tuesday (August 01, 2023). The Supreme Court proposes appointing its own Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate into matters related to the Manipur violence.

\* Excerpts from "Give us complete breakdown of 6,000 FIRs: SC to Manipur govt.; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

## DELHI SERVICES BILL TO BE TABLED IN LOK SABHA

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, will be introduced in the Parliament of India, that seeks to replace the Delhi services ordinance. The Bill mandates the creation of an authority for transfers and postings of senior officers in the Delhi government and designate the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) as the final authority on the postings and transfers of all bureaucrats serving under the Delhi government.

The Bill dropped Section 3A in the ordinance that empowered Legislative Assembly to make laws as per Article 239AA except with respect to any matter enumerated in Entry 41 of List II of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India or any related matter, notwithstanding anything contained in any judgment, order or decree of any court.

The Bill expands the appointing powers of the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G), empowers the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) to appoint the heads of Boards or Commissions enacted by Delhi Legislative Assembly.

The Delhi services ordinance was promulgated on May 19 effectively negating the May 11 Supreme Court judgement

*“ to give effect to the intent and purpose behind the provisions of Article 239AA of the Constitution, a permanent authority, headed by the Chief Minister of Delhi along with the Chief Secretary, and the Principal Secretary, Home, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi.”*

- Union Government



effectively empowering the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Delhi Government to make laws and wield control over bureaucrats deputed to the Delhi government.

[Section 3A, Delhi services ordinance - Notwithstanding anything contained in any judgment, order or decree of any court, the Legislative Assembly shall have the power to make laws as per Article 239AA except with respect to any matter enumerated in Entry 41 of List II of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India or any matter connected therewith or incidental thereto.]

\* Excerpts from "Delhi services Bill all set to be tabled today in Lok Sabha; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

## KARNATAKA HIGH COURT BATS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY



“the activity of design and engineering should have been carried out by the bidder and not through any external design agency/agencies”

- Division Bench, State High Court of Karnataka

The High Court of Karnataka quashed a tender awarded by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) citing interest of national security from the defence perspective assuming greater national significance than the public interest.

A Division Bench on an appeal filed by Macawber Beekay Pvt. Ltd., a Noida-based company declared the tender awarded by BHEL in favour of Kolkata-based BTL EPC Ltd, which had entered into a consortium agreement with Chinese firm Fujian Longking Co. Ltd to set up an ash handling plant forming part of installation of a thermal power station in Telangana as invalid. The Division Bench cited the order, issued by the Finance Ministry on July 23, 2020, in national defence interest, makes registration with competent authority mandatory for the bidders from countries having a land border with India.

\* Excerpts from "Interest of national security from defence perspective trumps public interest"; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

### ECONOMICS

## SEMICONDUCTORS AND INDIA

The Union Government at the Semicon India summit made a fresh bid to attract major global chip manufacturers into the country. The Government has taken pro-active steps, including offering low corporate tax rates, financial assistance to set up production facilities under India's semiconductor programme to name a few.

India launched a \$ 10 billion Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for chip makers in late 2021. Recently, the U.S.-based Micron Technology announced a \$ 2.75 billion assembly, testing, marking and packaging facility in Gujarat. However, a \$ 20 billion venture announced by Vedanta and Foxconn in 2022 was cancelled after negotiations fell apart. The US has drawn over \$ 200 billion in commitments with \$ 52 billion financing support for semiconductor makers in 2021. Intel alone has committed \$80 billion in outlays across the European Union.

Apart from incentives, investors also need to see evidence of a stable operating environment with a predictable policy framework, not amenable to knee-jerk deviations such as export curbs to cope with shortages. They would also compare India's trade linkages with world markets through bilateral or multilateral compacts and its approach to trade tariffs. Several countries seek to de-risk themselves from the dominance of China in the chips manufacturing supply-chain through collaborative or 'friendshoring' arrangements.

\* Excerpts from "Chip tactics; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

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## FOXCONN TO SET UP PLANT IN KANCHEEPURAM



Foxconn Group Chairman Young Liu meeting Chief Minister M.K. Stalin in Chennai on Monday.

Taiwanese firm Foxconn Technology Group, a key supplier to Apple Inc., offered investment commitments worth ₹1,600 Cr. to the Tamil Nadu government for establishing a mobile component manufacturing facility in Kancheepuram district. The investment made by its subsidiary Foxconn Industrial Internet (FII) is expected to generate direct employment for 6000 people.

Mr. Liu signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and Guidance (the nodal agency instrumental in bringing investments to the State). The MoU enables Foxconn to support research and development capabilities in partnership with IIT-M for Tamil Nadu to improve the talent pool's skills and industry readiness to cater to the evolving needs of the electronics industry and share knowledge and best practices in higher-order talent and workforce development.

\* Excerpts from "Foxconn signs deal with T.N. to build plant in Kancheepuram; The Hindu August 01, 2023"



## INDIA'S CORE SECTOR GROWS

Seven of the eight core sectors registered an uptick in the month; these constitute 40.3 % of the Index of Industrial Production

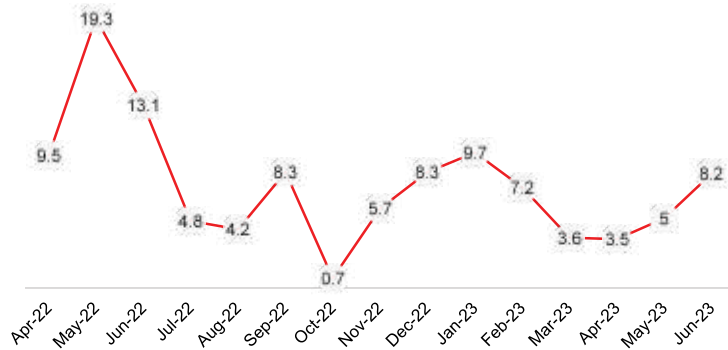


FIGURE: Line chart representation of the core sector growth rates (on Y-o-Y basis in per cent)

India's core sector output surged 8.2 % in June, the fastest pace in five months, buoyed by a 21.9 % spike in steel output and nearly double-digit rise in coal and cement production. Core sectors' overall growth was broad-based and reflected the upturn in infrastructure expenditures. The government push in infrastructure, especially in roads, is reflected by the strong cumulative double-digit growth in steel and cement sectors in the

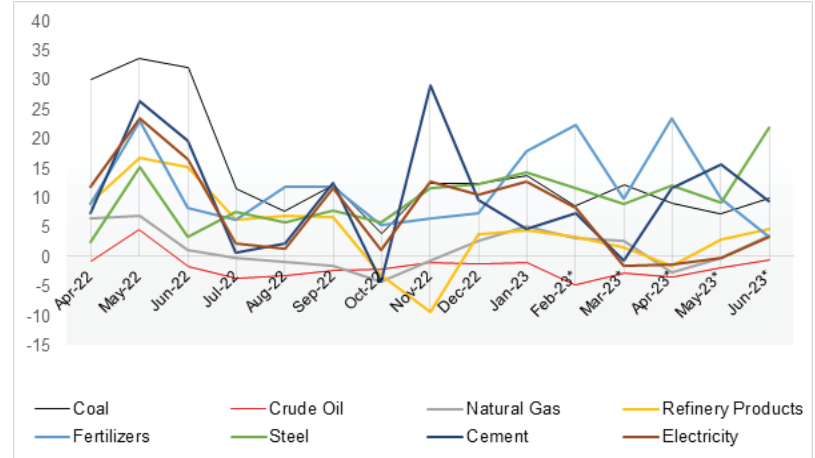


FIGURE: Line chart representation of the sub-sectoral growth rates (on Y-o-Y basis in per cent) of core sector industries.

first quarter of this year. The tardy onset of the monsoon contributed to an improved performance for sectors like electricity and coal.

\* Excerpts from "At 8.2%, India's core sector growth touches 5-month high in June; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## CINEMATOGRAPH BILL TABLED IN LS



The Lok Sabha passed the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023, days after the draft law was cleared by Rajya Sabha.

Salient features of the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023:

1. Prescribe penalties and imprison people who record movies inside theatres.
2. Expands the number of age ratings available to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), which censors and clears films for public exhibition.
3. Retained the censorship powers of the CBFC.

4. Formalises other practices that have evolved in the past, such as the facility to re-certify a film rated for adults for television.

### Fiscal deficit touched 25.3% of full-year target in April-June

The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of the first quarter was 25.3% of the full-year target, government data showed on Monday. The fiscal deficit — the gap between expenditure and revenue — was ₹4,51,370 crore as at end-June, according to the Controller General of Accounts (CGA). The deficit stood at 21.2% of Budget Estimates (BE) in the corresponding period the previous year.

In the Union Budget, the government projected fiscal deficit at a lower 5.9% of gross domestic product in the current financial year, compared with 6.4% of GDP in 2022-23. In the first quarter of 2023-24, the CGA said, net tax revenue was ₹4,33,620 crore or 18.6% of BE for the current fiscal. It was 26.1% of BE at end-June 2022. The central government's total expenditure in the first quarter stood at ₹10.5 lakh crore or 23.3% of BE. Total expenditure had touched 24% of BE in the year-earlier period.

\* Excerpts from "Cinematograph Bill aimed at curbing piracy cleared by LS; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

## INTERNAL SECURITY

## FOES AND FRIENDS

The terrorist attack at a political rally by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), a hardline party led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, a key member of Pakistan's ruling coalition in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) killed 54 people and gravely injured 200. Provincial police identify the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) behind the attack. The JUI-F, which has maintained ideological ties with the Afghan Taliban, has been targeted by the IS-K in the past. The IS-K, which has stepped up attacks in

Afghanistan since 2021, has repeatedly targeted Taliban-affiliated groups besides Afghanistan's minorities.

In January 2023, an attack on a mosque in Peshawar, the provincial capital of KP killed at least 74. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), also known as the Pakistan Taliban with close ideological links with the Afghan Taliban but organisationally different claimed the responsibility of the attack. A month later, another attack there left over 100 dead.

Pakistan has followed decades-long strategy of supporting Islamist extremists for its geopolitical goals. During Afghanistan's anti-communist civil war, Pakistan supported the Mujahideen with weapons and training. In the early 1990s, during the intra-Mujahideen civil war, Pakistan backed the emerging Taliban. After the Taliban were toppled in the US invasion in 2001, Pakistan played a double game — joining America's war yet harbouring the Taliban. Ever since the Taliban seized Afghanistan in August 2021, Pakistan has witnessed rising terror.

The Muslim youth across the Af-Pak region radicalised by decades of civil war radicalised pose security threats to the Pakistani establishment. The Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K)

emerged as the most powerful armed opposition to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), also known as the Pakistan Taliban with close ideological links with the Afghan Taliban emboldened by the Taliban's return in Afghanistan.

In 2014-15, Pakistan carried out a combing operation in the border region to crush the Pakistan Taliban. Pakistan, grappling with a political gridlock and a deteriorating economy, now faces a two-front security challenge — the Pakistani Taliban and the IS-K.

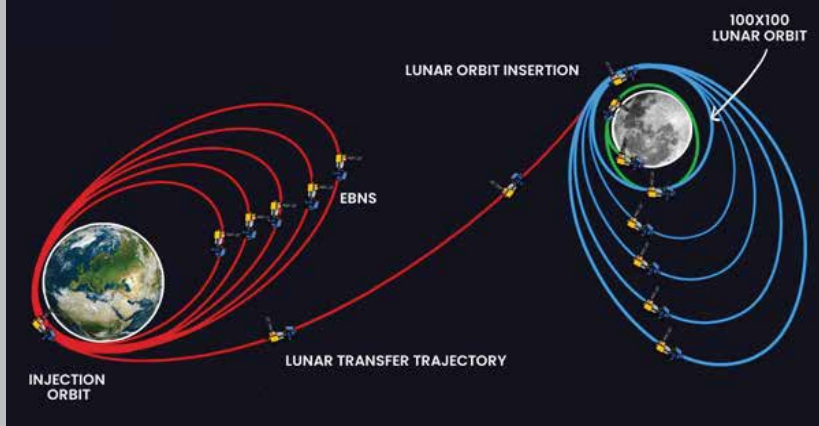
\* Excerpts from "Over the borderline; The Hindu August 01, 2023"

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### INDIA'S LUNAR PUSH

Chandrayaan-3 completes its orbits around the Earth and heads towards the Moon. A successful perigee-firing performed at ISTRAC, ISRO has injected the spacecraft into the translunar orbit

- Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO

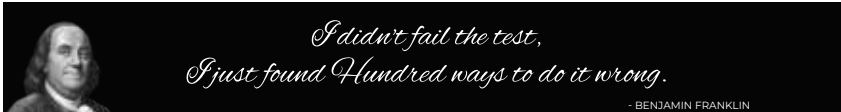


The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) performed the TransLunar Injection (TLI) of Chandrayaan III successfully from ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) in Bengaluru. The Chandrayaan III consists of a lander module (LM), a Propulsion Module (PM) and a rover.

#### TIMELINE OF CHANDRAYAAN III

1. August 01: Trans-Lunar Injection (TLI) of Chandrayaan III to the lunar orbit.
2. August 05: Lunar-Orbit Insertion (LOI) of Chandrayaan III followed by 4 orbit manoeuvres to position the spacecraft into its final orbit at a distance of about 100 km from the lunar surface.
3. August 17: Separation of Propulsion Module (PM) and the Lunar Module (LM).
4. August 23: Expected touch down on the lunar surface at 5:47 pm after a series of de-boosting manoeuvres scheduled to take place before the power descent phase for soft-landing on the moon.

\* Excerpts from "ISRO successfully puts Chandrayaan-3 in translunar orbit; The Hindu August 01, 2023"



### GOVT. FLOATS DRAFT NATIONAL DEEP TECH START-UP POLICY

The office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government circulated a draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) for public comments. The policy seeks to

1. Ensure India's position in the global deep tech value chain, in areas such as semiconductors, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and space technology.
2. Bolster research and development in deep tech start-ups, which work on fundamental and technical problems, unlike firms that monetise technology with distinguished business models.
3. Explore approaches to provide financing to deep tech start-ups at critical moments, such as before they go to market with their products or ideas.
4. Streamline the intellectual property regime for such start-ups, ease regulatory requirements, and proposes measures to promote these firms. The NDTSP suggests that an Export Promotion Board be created to ease barriers of entry for Indian deep tech start-ups into foreign markets, and that clauses to ease such market access be included in foreign trade agreements.

\* Excerpts from "Govt. floats draft National Deep Tech Start-up Policy; The Hindu August 01, 2023"





## COOKING CONUNDRUM

The Government of India has attempted to replicate the success of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) adoption in urban households to poorer and rural households over the past 2 decades.

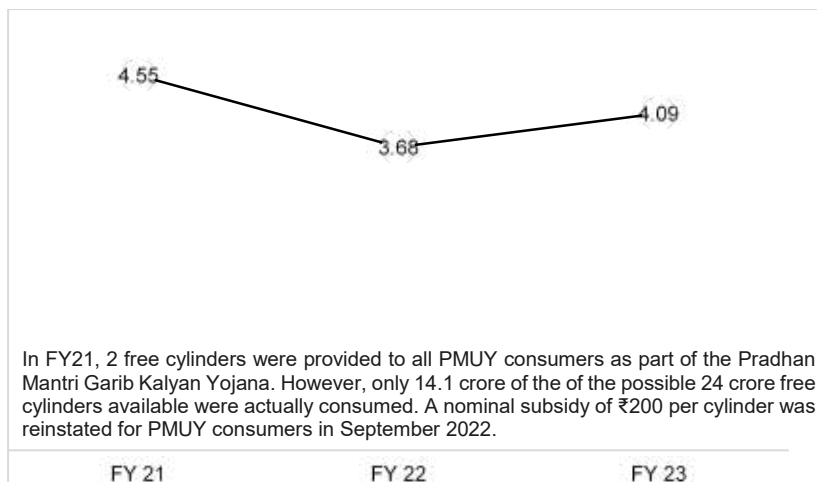
The share of rural distributor base in the total LPG distributor base grew from 18 % to 60 % with the launch of the Grameen Vitrak Yojana in 2009. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) provided LPG connections to more than 9.5 Cr. new households since 2016. According to the India Residential Energy Consumption Survey (IRES) conducted by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), the share of Indian households using LPG as the primary cooking fuel had risen from 33 % in 2011 to 71 % in 2020. The LPG consumption in Indian households with near-universal coverage of LPG saw an absolute reduction in FY23 of 0.5 % versus FY22 after years of steady growth.

### The LPG story

India's dependence on imported LPG — the refined commodity — has steadily increased to over 64% in FY23 (versus 46% in the pre-PMUY phase). LPG prices since May 2020 have significantly increased after the volatile international prices, especially since the Russian war against Ukraine, and a domestic budget that relies on petroleum (and its products) taxation significantly.

### Diversity in clean cooking

India's clean cooking policy must shift from an LPG-only strategy and need to actively pivot towards the adoption of a suite of flameless-based cooking clean-cooking technologies - electric



In FY21, 2 free cylinders were provided to all PMUY consumers as part of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. However, only 14.1 crore of the of the possible 24 crore free cylinders available were actually consumed. A nominal subsidy of ₹200 per cylinder was reinstated for PMUY consumers in September 2022.

FIGURE: Line chart representation of the annual refill rates for LPG among PMUY consumers per active connection

cooking, including induction cook-tops to name a few.

A CEEW study finds that even at a high tariff of ₹8 for each unit of electricity, e-cooking would still be cheaper than cooking using LPG at today's prices. In urban areas, nearly 10% of households already use electrical appliances for their cooking needs, and they can seed the bigger transition that we want to realise in rural areas. With near 100% access to electricity connections, rural households can also shift specific cooking needs to electricity. The adoption of telescopic pricing of LPG beyond a threshold could displace LPG in higher-use groups and, in turn, create a demand for new e-cooking technologies and models, and precipitate a bandwagon effect.

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*Head Office:*  
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Mercy Estate,  
MG Road, Ravipuram,  
Ernakulam-682 015,

*Corporate office:*  
**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,  
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,  
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

*Regional office*  
**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,  
Museum Road. Bangalore -  
560001. Karnataka, India.

*GCC Office:*  
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