

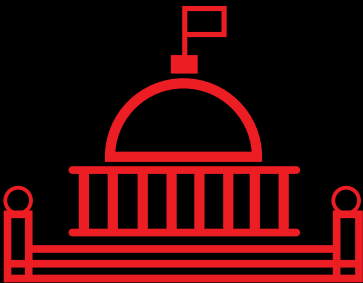
CivilsDigest

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***Why you should join Civil
Services (IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS or
like) in India?***
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**Warren Hasting | Pitt | Cornwallis
| Thomas Munro | Holt Mackenzie |
Marquess Wellesley**

***The First
Firangis***
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NJAC
A Triumphant Verdict
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Editor's Desk

He just wanted a decent book to read . . .

Not too much to ask, was it? It was in 1935 when Allen Lane stood on a British railway platform looking for something good to read on his journey. His choice was limited to popular magazines and poor quality paperbacks. Lane's disappointment and subsequent anger at the range of books available led him to found a company – and change the world.

That company was Penguin Books. This magazine has nothing to do with them(gotcha!) but this is one of our favorite stories on how a small but ambitious idea ends up changing reading habits and consumption patterns!

Since our inception, we have strived to maintain our focus on doing just one thing right – **news with context**. We have experimented with –

1. Daily newscards (on the app) to save your time from the opinionated newsbytes,
2. Connected stories to help you with the backstory of a newsbyte and analyse it better,
3. Explainers of news to help you visualise and understand news & topics in depth,
4. Back2basics to learn static via dynamic and so on...

What we all have got in return is an **amazing community** with richer and meaningful discussions + a little bit bakar 😊

This magazine is the culmination of all that we hold dear at Civildaily – **Great content & empowering design**.

We have tried to reimagine the best way to consume content, yet again. We did this for digital screens before, we are doing this for print now and we sincerely hope that you will come to love it! In all this re-imagination and stuff, we might have missed out on some grammar and you might . So, if you come across some sentences where *we typd lyk tis and rote lyk tat*, please excuse for the Edition #0. We promise that all the future editions will be edited to Wren & Martin level of perfection.

PS: If you are a regular at civildaily.com, we would urge you to spread this magazine & the original blog post to all the social, asocial, offline & online network that you can think of. The team has put in their heart and soul into making this a reality and we would love to be help to as many aspirants as we can.

PPS: If you got this magazine as a result of the above persuasion, welcome aboard!
Acclimatise yourself with the [civildaily](https://civildaily.com) app & website and kick the fresh year of IAS Prep with renewed confidence & great content.

Send an email to : hello@civildaily.com

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How to use this magazine?

Implications of yuan's rise

- The **International Monetary Fund** (IMF) is poised to approve the **inclusion of China's renminbi** (or yuan as it is called) as a reserve currency.
- When the yuan is formally inducted into the **SDR portfolio**, it will be the first new currency to be so honoured since the euro was created.
- The important advantage accruing to China is the flexibility in settling all its international obligations with its own currency.
- For other countries, the benefit in having another reserve currency is that they can **diversify their forex reserve** portfolios to include renminbi.

[b2b] = Back to Basics

Revise Static with Dynamic. What better than to have contextual cards given alongside with Newsbytes!

Newscards

Hand curated summaries from the most relevant news sources, compiled in quick, fact based format for ease of understanding.

[b2b] Let's know about Special Drawing Rights(SDR)?

- The SDR is an international **reserve** asset, created by the IMF in **1969** to supplement its member countries' official reserves.
- Its value is based on a basket of 4 key international currencies, and SDRs can be exchanged for freely usable currencies.
- SDRs are the IMF's unit of account **restricted to its members**.
- Today the SDR basket consists of the **euro, Japanese yen, pound sterling, and U.S. dollar**.

Vienna Conference

to end Syria's endless agony

What's the Vienna conference ?

The conference at Vienna on October 30, bringing together **17 states** (China, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the UK, and the US), ended with a **nine-point joint communique**.

The **United Nations (UN)** and **European Union (EU)** were also represented at the conference.

The highlights of the communique

Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and secular character are fundamental, and imperative to promote all efforts to end the war.

The Islamic State (IS) and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UNSC, must be defeated.

The UN is invited to convene a conference of representatives of the Syrian Government and the Opposition to start a political process leading to a negotiated settlement.

Explainers

Detailed explainers on the current affairs with the aid of infographics and comic strips to enhance retention.

Vienna Conference to end Syria's endless agony

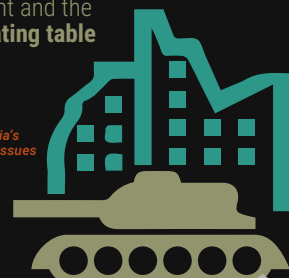
Get Syrian Government and the Opposition to **negotiating table**

WHY?



To end Syria's complicated issues

After the Russian military intervention, **Assad's position**, from a military point of view at least, has improved



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Features of this interactive PDF:



Bookmarks




Interactive
Contents page



Link for online to join the
conversation

Economy



**66 newscards | Hand curated
summaries
of the most
relevant news
items from
Economy**

Economy

[b2b] Let's know about Dedicated Freight Corridor project (DFCP)?

- Under the **11th Five Year Plan** (2007–2012), Ministry of Railways is constructing a new DFCP covering about **3300 route km** long two routes.
- The **Eastern Corridor** from Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal.
- The **Western Corridor** connecting Dadri in Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai, Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), will traverse through NCR and the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Rail upgrade to boost economic growth by 3%

- The ongoing **modernisation of railways** may boost the country's GDP by about **3%** over a period of time.
- About 103 announcements made in the FY16 railway budget have been implemented with several stations showing marked improvement in cleanliness.
- The ministry is also planning to **redevelop 400 stations** through open bids called the **Swiss Challenge** method, a form of public procurement.

Student loans dry up as bad debts climb at banks

- Banks were given a target of **20%** growth in disbursements.
- There are lots of **NPA's in the education sector** and rising in the last few years.
- Due to rising bad loans, the finance ministry, at the request of bankers, has created a **credit guarantee fund** for education loans.
- It has also asked banks to integrate with the **Vidya Lakshmi portal**.
- This is a **first** of its kind portal providing a **single window** for students to access information and submit applications for educational loans to banks and for government scholarships.

India to sell rupee bonds: Modi

- India has decided to start selling **Rupee Bonds** in some countries to provide long-term finance for infrastructure development in the country.
- Singapore could be among the countries where the **Rupee Bonds** would be offered.
- India has further opened up the economy for FDI, along with relaxation of **entry and exit norms** to a great extent.
- The **opportunities** in India ranged from building 50 mn **affordable houses** and 100 smart cities, modernisation of railway infrastructure, generation of 175 GW of renewable energy, etc.

Bad debts of banks at unacceptable level: FM

- The health of the **public sector banks(PSBs)** was a key subject, particularly in relation to the fact that a carried over problem of the past continues to persist.
- The gross The non-performing assets(NPAs) of public sector banks were at **6%**, up from 5.2% in March.
- The government is also in the process of framing a **bankruptcy code** aimed to tackle wilful default and a draft paper was recently released.

An Umbrella Scheme Blue Revolution

- It was organised by Union Agriculture Welfare Ministry and they inaugurate it as **"World Fisheries Day-2015"**.
- The objective is to cover inland fisheries, aquaculture, marine fisheries and all activities undertaken by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).
- It will lead to ushering in **Blue Revolution** through an integrated development and management of fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- Ensure sustained acceleration and intensification of fish production beyond the projected annual growth rate.

[b2b] Did you know SARFAESI Act, 2002?

- It was enacted to regulate securitization and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest created in respect of Financial Assets to enable realization of such assets.
- It allows banks and financial institution to auction residential or commercial properties to recover loans.
- The first asset reconstruction company (ARC) of India, **ARCIL**, was set up under this act.

Insolvency resolution in India plagued by wide range of problems: report

- A survey of Indian companies by the consultancy also found that there are **systemic problems** in the way stressed assets are relieved currently.
- The survey found that the 'top three challenges in the current setup with respect to revival of stressed assets'.
- **SARFAESI** Act gives secured lenders the legal right to replace ineffectual management.
- The report recommends that the proposed **National Company Law Tribunal** should have a separate bench for handling bankruptcy cases.

Consumer Affairs Dept. has no concrete power: Paswan

- The Consumer Affairs Department does not have any **concrete power** to check food inflation.
- The Department **monitors** the prices of 22 essential food items, it can ask States to impose **stockholding limits** and issue directions to carry out **de-hoarding operations**.
- Recently, the prices of pulses, onion, tomato and peas have **risen sharply**, hurting household budgets.

Make-in-India initiative seen as growth driver for foundries

- The Indian foundry industry expects **\$3 billion of investment** in another 10 years to meet the potential demand of 30 MT of castings.
- Currently, the installed capacity is 15 MT and annual production is 10 MT.
- India is the **3rd largest producer** of castings globally and almost 60% of the casting is consumed by **automobile sector**.
- There are indications of **revival** in the automobile sector and new opportunities in **defence** procurement.

Delicate balancing: A spending boost, but an inflationary aftershock likely

- Market experts say that while on one hand it will provide a big stimulus to the economy in coming years.
- On the other hand, it would be inflationary in nature, thus calls for **delicate balancing** between **growth and inflation**.
- On the fiscal front, experts feel that a burden of Rs 73,000 crore in FY17 may not pose a major problem for the Centre.
- Analysts feel that it will lead to **rise in consumption** and will thus provide boost to the economy.

Centre committed to boost public spending on infrastructure

- The Centre is committed towards **boosting public spending** on infrastructure.
- It will give boost to allied sectors such as **cement and steel**, leading to greater employment generation.
- An improved image will help the country attract **greater foreign investments**, increase manufacturing and create more jobs.
- There is concern that govt. could be forced to **bring down public expenditure**, owing to 7th CPC recommendations and expected reduction of corporate tax rates.

Economy

[b2b] Lets know more about Central Pay Commission

- The Central Pay Commission is set up almost **every 10 years** to revise the pay scale of its employees by govt. of India.
- It reviews and make recommendations on the **work and pay structure of all civil and military divisions** of the Gol.
- It is headquartered in Delhi, and it is generally given 18 months from date of its constitution to make its recommendations.
- Generally, the recommendation are **adopted by states** after some modification.

[b2b] What are the functions envisaged under TADF?

- Direct Support for Technology Acquisition.
- In-direct Support for Technology Acquisition through Patent Pool.
- Technology/Equipment Manufacturing Subsidies.
- **Green Manufacturing-Incentive** Scheme facilitates resource conservation activities for implementation of renewable energy projects through TADF.

Launch of Technology Acquisition and Development Fund under National Manufacturing Policy

- Technology Acquisition and Development Fund (TADF) under National Manufacturing Policy being implemented by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
- TADF is a new scheme to facilitate acquisition of **Clean, Green and Energy Efficient** Technologies.
- It is in form of Technology/ Patents/ Industrial Design available in market, available in India or globally, by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- Scheme would facilitate acquisition of clean and green technologies by micro, small and medium units across the sectors and thus, bridge the technological gap at an affordable cost.
- Scheme is conceptualised to catalyse manufacturing growth in MSME sector to contribute to the national focus of **"Make in India"**.

HUPA to add 2,28,204 housing units in 5 States

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) has authorized the construction of 2,28,204 housing units for **economically weaker sections**.
- Currently, the govt. is battling the **housing shortage** of 18.78 million units.
- Most of this shortage is driven by **low income populations** who live in and around the **urban** centres.
- The clearance will fill the housing stock to some degree only if the **financial devolution** happens smoothly.
- It will cover **5 States** —AP, Telengana, TN, GJ and Rajasthan.

CCI slaps Rs 258 cr penalty on IndiGo, SpiceJet, Jet Airways

- It also issued a cease and desist order against airlines on the complaint filed by Express Industry Council of India (EICI).
- These 3 airlines acted in collusion to fix fuel surcharge rates which resulted in indirectly determining the rates of air cargo transport.
- It was contravention of the **anti-competitive agreements** in the air cargo industry.
- Fuel surcharge was essentially introduced to mitigate **fuel price volatility**.
- Cartelisation of it by leading airliners has harmed the **fair competition** in the market.

[b2b] What's the purpose of AMRUT ?

- It launched with focus of **Urban renewal projects**, aimed at transforming 500 cities and towns into efficient **urban living spaces**.
- To establish infrastructure that could ensure adequate robust **sewerage networks and water supply** for urban transformation.
- To ensure every household has access to a tap with assured supply of water and a sewerage connection.
- **Rajasthan** was the first state to submit State Annual Action Plan (SAAP) under AMRUT.

Cities seek to address water logging problem under Atal Mission

- 5 States to invest Rs.242 cr under Atal Mission action plans for 2015-16.
- With water logging in cities following rains being a recurrent problem, to address issue under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).
- **Construction of storm water drains** prioritized after provision of basic infrastructure relating to water supply and sewerage connections.
- Central assistance to the extent of **50% of project costs**, with a population of **below 10 lakhs** each and one-third of project cost if population is above 10 lakhs.

Well-stocked granaries may help hold rice price line, says trade body

- There is a growing concern that the **price of rice** may be next to shoot up.
- An Assocham study has warned of an increase in prices of rice owing to **deficient rain** and **fall in output**.
- The economy was likely to **slow down** considerably with **inflationary** pressures, coupled with a shortage of essential food items.
- However, Punjab and Haryana, the States that contribute the highest quantity of rice and wheat, have **surpassed** last year's purchase of paddy.

Boost production of pulses, says expert

- The agricultural experts stressed on the need to develop **new varieties of pulses** with higher yield.
- This will protect **farmers' interests** and people will not be deprived of **nutrition**.
- Govt. should push for **technological advancement** to increase the productivity of pulses.
- To improve and develop new varieties of pulses, **huge investments** in R&D is required to be made.
- The **overall yield** of pulses in India is far **lower** than the world level of 910 kg per hectare.

Jaitley asks market-makers to improve their credibility, integrity

- **For what?** In the name of institution and capacity building!
- In comparison to most other nations, our household savings at 28-29% is good. But we can do better.
- The event was to celebrate **NSDL**, which is the largest depository in the country with over 89% market share of the demat securities.

[b2b] How does urea subsidy works?

- Urea is provided to farmers at a **fixed subsidised MRP** of Rs. 5,360 per tonne.
- The **difference** between the cost of production and MRP of urea is provided as subsidy to manufacturers.
- The current nutrient-based subsidy system, introduced in 2010, kept urea **outside its purview**.
- **Gas** constitutes about 65-70% of the cost of production of urea and cost of gas used is reimbursed by the govt. in the form of subsidy

Ministry seeks more than Rs. 25,000-cr for urea subsidy bills

- The Fertiliser Ministry has sought funds from the Finance Ministry for making **subsidy payments** to domestic urea manufacturers.
- The govt. had allocated Rs.72,968.56 crore for **fertiliser subsidy**, out of which Rs.38,200 crore was earmarked for domestic urea.
- The govt. has taken slew of measures to **improve the efficiency** of urea manufacturers so as to reduce the subsidy bill.
- It has issued revised **energy norms** under the new urea policy for existing 25 gas based urea plants in the country.

Govt. eases FDI norms in 15 major sectors, including defence, civil aviation

- The Government has eased FDI norms in 15 major sectors.
- The govt. also increased the **financial power of the FIPB** to give single window clearance for investment projects up from Rs 3,000 crore to Rs 5,000 crore.
- This will help him reinforce the govt's narrative on **economic reforms** and its intent to attract global investors and ease rules for them.
- The new norms have removed **outdated conditionalities** and many more areas have been put on the automatic route.
- In **defence**, the govt. has allowed foreign investment up to 49% under the **automatic route**, earlier under the govt. approval route.

BIS elects Raghuram Rajan as its vice-chairman

- Raghuram Rajan has been elected vice-chairman of the Bank of International Settlement (BIS).
- Mr. Rajan will have a 3-year term as vice-chairman of the BIS.
- Mr. Rajan is the **first Indian central bank Governor** to become the vice-chairman of BIS.
- He has been a **strong critic** of unconventional monetary policies such as quantitative easing and keeping interest rates at near-zero level for long.
- He also believes that sustainable global growth would require **coordination** of central banks.

Coal: India not just importing

- The coal exports declined to 1.24 million tonne (MT) in 2014-15 against 2.19 MT in 2013-14.
- This is amid rising concerns over dependence on coal imports, the Centre continues to **export the fuel** to various countries.

Bailouts galore in power sector: Where's the plug

- The good thing this time is that UDAY promises **no grants** or upfront write down of losses for distribution utilities.

- The biggest question is that, whether the new scheme has **enough incentives** built in to draw state govts.
- These taken-over loans will not be counted for the **states' FRBM limits** for the current fiscal year and the next.
- The new scheme hinges on the premise that with loans off their books and improved balance sheets, SEBs will be able to sell the rest of their **outstanding debt** as bonds backed by state govt. guarantee.

Government considers Africa route to help central PSUs

- **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE)** wants MEA to influence African countries, especially those with hardly any private capital investment.
- The DPE, as per its proposal, wants these African countries to reserve several sectors for SOEs.
- The African countries will have to make policies **conducive for the PSUs** to operate.
- Private companies tend to not take the risk of investing in unstable economies such as those in Africa.
- So PSUs, with the help of African governments, can take **lead in investments** and the private sector can then follow.

Seizing the Demographic Dividend. Is that so easy?

- Not really.

There's a chapter with a similar name in the Economic Survey for 2012-13. It captures the nub of the problem when it says the following:

- While industry is creating jobs, too many such jobs are low productivity, non-contractual jobs in the unorganized sector.
- These jobs offer low incomes, little protection and no benefits.
- Service jobs are relatively high productivity, but employment growth in services has been slow.

[op-ed snap] The problem with Make in India

- India's natural comparative advantage lies in using its unskilled labour.
- But Indian manufacturing as well as services is skill-intensive, which leaves unskilled masses short of decent jobs.
- That automatically means there aren't enough decent jobs for the unskilled masses
- Most new jobs have been in construction and that around 85% of the workforce is in the informal sector.

Textile sector can create 45-50% of direct jobs in rural India

- Textile sector has a potential to create **45-50% of direct jobs** in the rural India.
- The sector will be the **driving force** behind Skill India and Make in India initiatives.
- There is a need for **branding Indian Cotton** against the world labels, and emphasis on **R&D** to increase productivity.
- The average cotton productivity in India is 528 kg/hectare wherein the same stands 2,196 kg/hectare in Australia and 963 kg/hectare in the U.S.

Government considers Africa route to help central PSUs

- The Centre is considering a plan to help the Central PSUs set up subsidiaries or form **joint ventures** with State-owned enterprises (SOEs) in poor African countries.
- Private companies tend to not take the risk of investing in **unstable economies** such as those in Africa.
- The African countries will have to make **policies conducive** for the PSUs to operate, such as reserving several sectors for SOEs.
- This will enable CPSEs to operate in a near **monopolistic environment** for about 15-20 years.
- This can help many of the CPSUs, to get a **new lease of life** and turn profitable.

China stalling India's exports, says Commerce Minister

- China stalls India's exports through **non-tariff barriers** such as **phyto-sanitary stipulations** and **standardisation measures**.
- India's merchandise **trade deficit** with China had shot up from just \$1.1 billion in 2003-04 to **\$48 billion** in 2014-15.
- Most of the imports from China are consumer items and for 'Make in India' to be successful, China must be countered.
- Stressed on the need for **diversification** in the export market to counter China.

[b2b] What is Kayakalp ?

- Railway Budget 2015-16 speech, mentioned that every dynamic and thriving organization needs to **innovate and re-invent** its practices.
- It is setup for the purpose of **business re-engineering** and introducing a spirit of **innovation** in Railways.
- For innovative methods and processes for the improvement, betterment and transformation of the Indian Railways.
- Council is headed by noted Industrialist **Ratan Tata**.

4th Meeting of "Kayakalp" held in New Delhi

- Discuss the **safety issues** and attempted to identify the **causes for accidents** on account of **manual failures**.
- The Council looked at approaches towards achieving greater **hygiene and cleanliness** on railway facilities such as stations.
- Council examined the customer focus of Indian Railways at present and ways to make the organization more **customer friendly**.
- All Members agreed on Railways' need to address customer needs in a more visible and effective manner.

Economy

NITI Panel Proposes Agri Reforms to Curb Price Rise

- NITI Aayog's task force on agriculture has recommended big bang reforms to address issue of frequent **spurt in crop prices**.
- Report talks about the need for reforms in the agriculture sector in a big way to address issues.
- As Bad weather, fluctuation in crop prices, and demand and supply problems in the long term.
- Recommendations are **Guaranteed prices** for half key crops, Setting up of a **unified national agriculture market**, Changing land **lease laws** etc.

UDAY scheme for financial turnaround of Power Distribution Companies

- Scheme aims at **financial turnaround** and **revival of Power Distribution companies** (DISCOMs) and ensures a sustainable permanent solution.
- Allows power DISCOMs in selected states to convert their **debt into state bonds** as well as roll out number of measures to improve efficiency at power plants.
- It Improves **operational efficiencies** of DISCOMs, **Reduce of cost of power**, **Reduce interest** cost of DISCOMs, Enforce financial discipline on DISCOMs.

Bankruptcy panel calls for insolvency regulator

- Bankruptcy Law Reforms Committee (BLRC), headed by **TK Vishwanathan**.
- It suggested setting up an **insolvency regulator** to exercise regulatory oversight over insolvency professionals and agencies.
- To ensure **speedier winding up** of insolvent companies and providing easier exit route to investors.
- Recommended, bankruptcy and insolvency processes for individuals with annual gross income of less than Rs 60,000 and aggregate assets of not more than Rs 20,000.

[b2b] What is the Precision agriculture ?

- Farming management concept based on observing, measuring and responding to inter and intra-field variability in crops.
- Based on the **Global Positioning System** (GPS).
- Geographical Information System (**GIS**) **maps** used to show where the soil in your field is moist, or eroded and where there are factors within the soil that limit crop growth.
- Some technologies, Variable-Rate Application (VRA) Seeding, Remote Imaging, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are used.

Govt calls for tying farming with industry

- Minister said, agriculture sector has the potential not only to drive the economy, but linked with **food processing**.
- According to India Meteorological Department, **302 districts** across India, or nearly half of all districts, received **deficit or scanty rainfall** this year.
- The Maharashtra CM said that countries in Europe and elsewhere are doing **precision farming**.

Study proposed on hank yarn demand

- On the export front, the industry needs to focus on improving competitiveness and diversifying market to increase exports.
- One of the demands of the textile industry is to reduce hank yarn obligation.
- Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS), proposal to modify the scheme and the review under progress.
- TUFS was introduced by the **Ministry of Textiles** in 1999, extended for a period **upto 2017**.
- It provides plan support for modernization of textiles industry in the form of **interest reimbursement** and **capital subsidy**.

Small tea growers seek international agency

- Efforts are also on to find ways to directly market small tea growers' produce.
- Recent inter-session meeting of the **Inter-governmental Group of FAO in Italy** discussed the plan.
- Representatives from **India**, Sri Lanka, Kenya, China, Japan, Malawi, the U.S., U.K. and others present.
- Need for an **international body** for small tea growers was brought by quite a few tea-growing countries including India, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Indonesia.
- **Price realisation, quality and cost** of production were core issues affecting segment.

Building, land regularisation schemes introduced

- Telangana government announced, residents of municipalities may apply for **regularisation** of encroached government lands and **illegally built structures**.
- Applications for regularisation of structures built on lake beds, service roads and nalas will not be entertained.
- Relaxation is offered to slum dwellers, may get their plots regularised by paying Rs.5 per square metre.
- Law is to be amended so, criminal cases slapped against builders of illegal structures and **tribunal for Town Planning wing**.
- In order to simplify the approval process for building plans and layouts, **single window clearances** will be introduced.

India yet to utilise info on black money

- HSBC whistle-blower said he is willing to cooperate with the **investigative agencies** in their black money probe but would need protection.
- He claimed that **lot of information** on illicit funds is lying **unused** by the Indian authorities.
- He also claimed that millions of crores worth illicit funds are **flowing out** of India.

Capping regional fares, under proposed RCS scheme, will hurt airlines, says CRISIL

- The proposed Regional connectivity scheme will be a big negative for the heavily indebted and loss-making airlines, as it would **cap fares on regional routes**.
- RCS needs more explanation as there is **no clarity** on whether a fare of Rs.2,500 per hour would be capped even for last-minute booking.
- Almost 50% of expenses of an airline are **due to fuel costs**, as total tax on jet fuel is around 45%.
- Some States levy as **high as 30% tax on ATF**.
- The linking of reduction in State level tax on ATF to 1% or below to avail the capped prices would help bring down the overall operational cost for airlines.

Cargo vehicle begins trial run on new Dhaka route

- The first trial run of a cargo vehicle on the **Kolkata-Agartala via Dhaka route**.
- It will reduce the distance between Kolkata and Agartala nearly by two-third.
- This is a part of the **4-nation agreement** among **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal** (BBIN) for cross-border movement of people and goods.
- The alternative route is likely to make the movement of goods between the north-eastern State and rest of the country more convenient.

Punjab to set up bio-ethanol refinery

- It play an important role in solving the chronic problem of **straw burning of leftover** agro-based produce especially from wheat and rice feedstocks.
- Benefit farmers economically, as they would be paid for their agro-based produce to **extract bio-ethanol**.
- It would also help in preventing the loss of fertility of soil and damage to environment by reducing air pollution.
- Bioethanol is an alcohol derived by process of **fermentation** mostly from carbohydrates of plant produce and feedstocks.
- Commonly obtained from crops such as sugarcane, cassava, corn, potato, beetroot etc.

India to emerge as largest cotton producer

- China has had to vacate its place as the largest producer of cotton to India.
- Cotton production in China and the U.S. has been estimated to be lower by 13.3% and 17.7% respectively.
- It anticipated yield to come down to 524 kg per hectare, lower than the previous yield of 527 kg per hectare.
- Because of **deficient rains** in the later half of the monsoon season and instances of **pest presence in Gujarat and Punjab**.

Buddhist Tourism Circuit Special Train Commences first Journey

- Indian Railways is operating Buddhist Tourism Circuit Special Train through Indian Railways Tourism and Catering Corporation (**IRCTC**).
- Launched in 2007, with objective of offering a safe, comfortable and reliable tour package for international as well as domestic travelers on the **Buddhist Circuit**.
- Train has been awarded the coveted **National Tourism Award of Excellence** by the Ministry of Tourism in Feb 2009.
- This train has become very popular among the pilgrims and tourist across the world.

RBI opens National Pension System as investment option for NRIs

- RBI has allowed non-resident Indians to subscribe to the NPS enabling them **access old age income security**.
- NPS will act as an investment option for NRIs under Foreign Exchange Management Act (**FEMA**), **1999**.
- NRIs may subscribe to the NPS through normal banking channels and the person is eligible to invest as per the provisions of the **PFRDA Act, 2013**.
- It was extended for all citizens of the country **from 1 May 2009** including the **unorganised sector workers** on voluntary basis.

New technology to improve shrimp farming in Tamil Nadu

- A new technology that increases the size of the shrimp larvae before they are introduced into the farm.
- The new technology increases the size of the **larvae to 90-95 mg** than earlier it used of 10 mg.
- This improves their survival rate and reduces the duration of the crop.
- Aerobic **Microbial Floc-driven nursery raceway technology**, the survival rate increases to over 90%.
- Instead of plankton feed, it utilised **heterotrophic microbes** that do not need sunlight and control the ammonia production.

Cap on small town fares mooted

- The Civil Aviation Ministry unveiled the **draft aviation policy** after a wide-range of consultations.
- It proposed to **cap small town route fares** at Rs. 2,500 per flying hour per ticket.
- It has also proposed a **2% cess** on all domestic as well as international tickets to **subsidise flights** on small town routes.
- The govt. will work towards **revival of un-served airports, build no-frills airports** and also give incentives and subsidies to stakeholders.
- The policy suggests a number of incentives for the **Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO)** sector.

Meet to devise new strategy to combat money laundering

- International groups **combating money laundering rackets** funding terror activities and organised crime syndicates will come together.
- They will meet in Delhi for **brainstorming** to build **greater inter-regional coordination** in law enforcement and intelligence-sharing.
- It will address a wide range of issues pertaining to **trans-border illicit financial transactions** by organised criminal syndicates and terror outfits.
- It will make recommendations to **strengthen** the South Asia Regional Information and Coordination Center for more concerted action in the region.

[op-ed snap] Up the ranks

- The World Bank's latest "Doing Business" report ranks India 130 out of 189 countries.
- One of the main reasons for the improvement was the current government **amending the Companies Act**.
- Another reason, India jumped a 29 rungs in **"getting electricity"**, changes made by the Delhi and Mumbai electricity utilities, that made getting a **connection easier**.
- The Centre could enact a **modern bankruptcy code**, as promised in this year's budget.
- A good start has also been made with the **formation of a committee** to overhaul the 1961 Income Tax Act to **make it less litigation-prone**.
- These rankings are, at best, an incomplete snapshot of **micro regulatory constraints** that affect small and medium enterprises.

Centre takes steps to speed up affordable housing schemes

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation along with other ministries will set up a system through which **affordable housing projects are cleared** at a faster pace.
- The govt. is battling a housing deficit of **18.78 million units**, of which **economically weaker population** requires 95% of housing units.
- The Centre is urging states to **reduce stamp duties**, registration and conversion fee.
- This will help in quickly filling the **housing stock** for the poor and low-income people across 989 cities.

Income Tax Dept sets up panel to simplify tax law

- The Income Tax Department set up a Justice R.V. Easwar committee in order to simplify the provisions of the **Income Tax Act, 1961**.
- Objective is to study the provisions or phrases in the Act, leading to litigation due to different interpretations, that are impacting the **ease of doing business**.
- To **simply tax issues**, Finance Minister launched a pilot project of '**e-sahyog**'.

Over 80,000 tonnes of seized pulses will be available in open market

- The Centre declared that the 82,462.53 tonnes of pulses seized in various States under the **Essential Commodities Act** would be made available in the open market.
- To **augment supplies** and arrest further hike in the **prices of tur and urad dals**.
- No word on the rate at which these pulses will be made available in the open market.
- Pulses importers and millers have urged the government to lift stock holding limits on pulses.
- Pulses prices shot up due to shortage in supplies **owing to drought**.

India moves up in 'ease of doing business' ranking

- India improved its position from last year's **134 to 130** in the **World Bank Doing Business 2016** ranking.
- Last year's report ranked India at 140, this year's report features the recalculated 2015 rankings, in which India comes at 134.
- The WB Doing Business reports, started in 2002, review business regulations and their enforcement across **189 countries**.
- Among South Asian economies, India made the biggest improvement in business regulation.
- India ranks in the top 10 in Protecting Minority Investors (8).

Income Tax Dept sets up panel to simplify tax law

- The Income Tax Department has set up a panel to help simplify the Income Tax Act, 1961, as part of the govt's move to **improve the ease of doing business**.
- It will study and identify the provisions that are leading to **litigation** due to **different interpretations** and those that can be simplified.
- The committee will also suggest **alternatives** to these provisions to bring about **predictability** and **certainty** in tax laws.

Economy

NITI Aayog panel moots private funding for R&D

- A NITI Aayog **panel on innovation** has recommended that the **private sector** should help **fund R&D**, including in research labs at universities and startups.
- The panel has also recommended **improved tax benefits** for investments equivalent to a percentage of corporate profits.
- The panel also suggested a **'Make in Universities'** program which would involve setting up 500 tinkering labs.
- It also recommended **Grand Prizes approach** to finding ultra-low-cost solutions to India's most intractable problems.

States sell subsidised pulses to hold price

- States have started selling pulses at prices much **lower than the market rates**, either through govt. agencies or the PDS.
- Earlier, Centre **appealed** States to supply tur dal at reasonable rates.

[op-ed snap] The problem of debt concentration

- Let's find some roots in the past, for dangerous growth in corporate debt ?
- First, the **bursting of the Indian credit bubble**, when bank loans grew around 10 percentage points faster than nominal GDP, has left behind inevitable cracks in the financial system.
- Second, the concerted push for higher private investment in infrastructure encouraged companies to take on excess debt.
- While, **inexplicable policy** of allowing companies in the non-tradable sector to take on foreign debt is beyond rational economic explanation.
- Third, the **regulatory mess** during last few years, **projects got stalled** after money was put on the ground and projects got into trouble because of **policy confusions** that were beyond control.
- Fourth, most heavily indebted companies shows that there is a strong link between the current **financial fragility** and **crony capitalism excesses** of the past decade.

I-T to roll out 'pilot' project for scrutiny assessment

- CBDT Chair Anita Kapur, said that the "first-of-its-kind initiative" is aimed at **making life easy for taxpayers**.
- Scrutiny assessment in an **e-environment**, where sending queries through email to 500 "select" taxpayers without calling them to its offices.
- The first set of **e-communications** will be emailed to 100 chosen people each in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Chennai regions.
- It eliminates necessity of visiting the Income Tax offices by the taxpayers, particularly in smaller cases, involving limited issues.

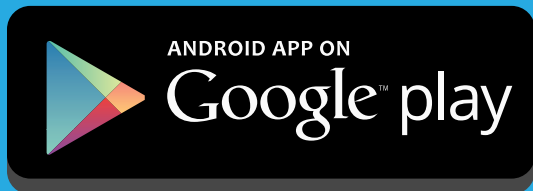
FinMin moves Cabinet note on monetary policy committee

- Cabinet note on setting up the proposed **monetary policy committee** (MPC), where RBI is expected to retain its dominant role.
- MPC to take key decisions on **interest rate changes**, and is decided by the central bank Governor on advice of the technical advisory committee.
- Government and RBI have already signed a **monetary policy framework** that has set an inflation target of **4%**.
- MPC comprises of Seven members, three from the RBI and three government nominees, with the RBI Governor having the casting vote.

Need to check flaws in banking system: Rajan

- RBI Governor said there is a **need to check flaws** in the banking system to ensure that defaulters are not let off scot-free.
- Called for **"focus" in implementation** of economic reforms and improving capacity at every level of economy and village.
- He stressed on the role of government spending in reviving growth, especially because exports are not doing as well as in the past.
- Need to constitute state level **co-ordination committees** to monitor unregistered and illegal operators with the Chief Secretary, DGP and District Collectors in the committees.

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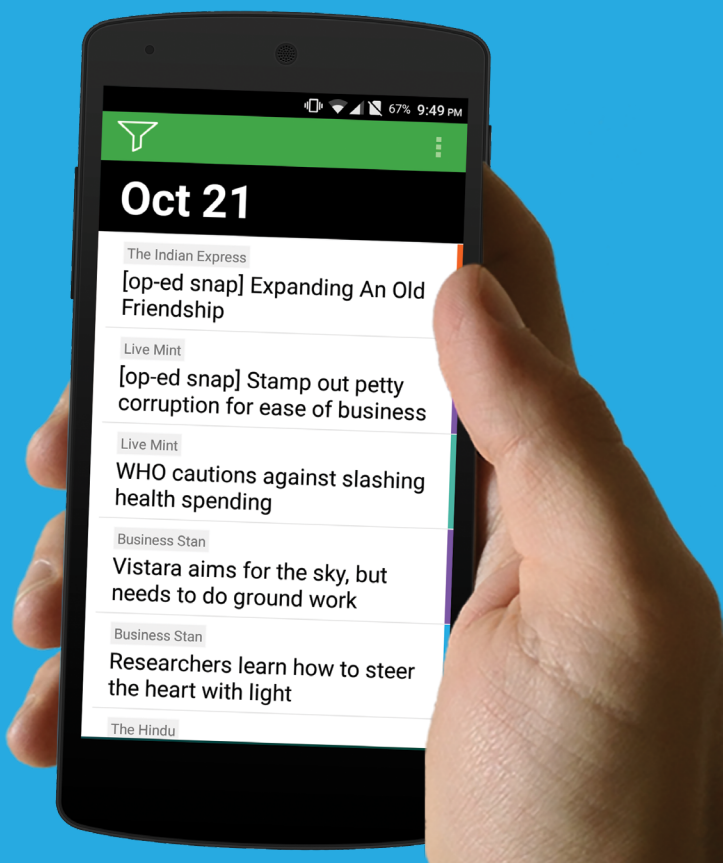


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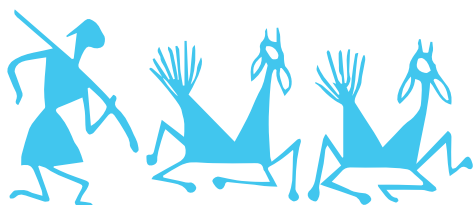
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Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

: Making Smart Villages

UNION CABINET APPROVES Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) in Sept, 2015, which was earlier announced in **Budget speech in July, 2014.**



Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission, named after founder of the Jan Sangh, an earlier avatar of the bjp, is aimed at setting up these clusters by 2019-20 across the country. Mission is reflection of former President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's idea of pura (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas).

Achieving twin objectives of strengthening rural areas and de burdening the urban areas, hence leading to balanced regional development and growth of the country.

Why there was a need for such mission ?

- Lack of Livelihood opportunities, modern amenities and services for decent living in rural areas leads to **migration of people from urban areas**.
- To **bridge the gap between villages and urban areas** in order to developed infrastructure, modern amenities and livelihood opportunities.

What is the basic aim of Mission ?

- Mission aims at **development of rural growth clusters** which have latent potential for growth, in all States and uts, triggers overall development in the region.
- Clusters would be developed by provisioning of economic activities, developing skills & local entrepreneurship with infrastructure amenities.
- The Rurban Mission will thus develop a **cluster of Smart Villages**.

How is it planned under Framework of implementation?

State Governments would identify the clusters in accordance with the Framework for Implementation prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Clusters will be geographically contiguous Gram Panchayats with a population of about 25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and a population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas.

So, How will the cluster be selected?

Ministry of Rural Development is adopting a scientific process of cluster selection, by objective analysis of demography, economy, tourism and pilgrimage significance and transportation corridor impact at each level.

The mission aims to **create 300 such Rurban growth clusters** over the **next 3 years**, across the country.

14 components desirable for the cluster

Skill development training linked to economic activities,

- Agro Processing/Agri Services/Storage
- Digital Literacy
- Sanitation, Provision of piped water supply
- Upgrading school /higher education facilities
- Inter-village road connectivity
- Citizen Service Centres / e-gram connectivity

So, what impact would this mission have on rural and urban areas?

The scheme through development of rurban growth clusters aimed at catalyzing overall regional growth, would thus simultaneously benefit the rural as well as urban areas of the country. 

SPMRM

To Provide **Urban Amenities** in Rural Areas and thus develop 300 clusters of **Smart Villages** over the next 3 years, **across the country**

WHY?

Lack of *Livelihood opportunities, modern amenities and services for decent living* in rural areas leads to **migration of people towards urban areas**



HOW?

by provisioning of economic activities, developing skills & local entrepreneurship with infrastructure amenities

*State Governments identify the clusters in accordance with the Framework for Implementation prepared by the **Ministry of Rural Development***

Necessary components:

- Skill development training linked to economic activities
- Agro Processing/Agri Services/Storage
- Digital Literacy
- Sanitation, Provision of piped water supply
- Upgrading school /higher education facilities
- Inter-village road connectivity
- Citizen Service Centres / e-gram connectivity

CLUSTER SELECTION

Geographically **contiguous Gram Panchayats** with



a population of about
**25000 to 50000 in plain
and coastal areas**



a population of **5000 to
15000 in desert, hilly
or tribal areas**

Ministry of Rural Development is adopting a scientific process of cluster selection, by objective analysis of demography, economy, tourism and pilgrimage significance and transportation corridor impact at each level

By achieving **twin objectives of strengthening rural areas and de burdening the urban areas** hence leading to **balanced regional development and growth** of the country.

PM Modi Launches 3 Gold Schemes

: A Golden Opportunity

IN A BID TO REIN in the gold imports and **attract investors** away from physical assets, PM Modi launches 3 Gold Schemes:

- 1. Gold Coin and Bullion scheme**
- 2. Gold Monetisation Scheme**
- 3. Gold Sovereign Bond Scheme**

#1. India Gold Coin and Bullion scheme

- The coin will be the **first ever national gold coin minted in India** and will have the **National Emblem of Ashok Chakra** engraved on one side and **Mahatma Gandhi** on the other side.
- Initially, the coins will be available in denominations of **5 and 10 grams**.
- The Indian Gold coin is unique in many aspects and will carry advanced **anti-counterfeit features and tamper proof packaging** that will aid easy recycling.

#2. Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), 2015

- Scheme allows you to earn some regular interest on your gold and save you carrying costs as well.
- It replaced the existing **Gold Deposit Scheme, 1999**.
- It offers option to resident Indians to deposit their precious metal and earn an interest of **up to 2.5%**.

Who can make deposits?

- Resident Indians (individuals, HUF, trusts, including mutual funds/exchange traded funds registered under Sebi norms) can make deposits under the scheme.
- No maximum limit for deposit under the scheme and the metal will be accepted at the **Collection and Purity Testing Centres (CPTC)** certified by the **Bureau of Indian Standards**.

#3. Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme

- Investors can earn an interest rate of **2.75%** per annum by buying paper bonds.
- Sovereign Gold Bonds will be issued in multiple tranches subject to the overall borrowing limits.
- The bond would be restricted for sale to **resident Indian entities** and the maximum allowable limit is **500 grams per person per year**.
- They can be used as **collateral for loans** and can be sold or traded on stock exchanges

Few more things to know

1. Minimum investment in the bond shall be **2 grams**.
2. The bonds can be bought by Indian residents or entities and is capped at **500 grams**.
3. The RBI has fixed the public issue price of sovereign gold bonds at Rs 2,684 per gram.
4. The borrowing through issuance of Bond will form part of **market borrowing programme** of Government.
5. The Bonds will be eligible for **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)**.

Why was there a need for such schemes?


1. To lure tonnes of gold from households into banking system.
2. According to the World Gold Council, an estimated 22,000-23,000 tonnes of gold is lying idle with households and institutions in India.
3. Huge gold imports pushed India's **current account deficit** (CAD) to a record \$190 billion in 2013, prompting the hike its duty on imports to a record 10%.
4. The government wants to reduce the reliance on **gold imports** over time.

But, will these schemes succeed in bringing down Gold imports?

1. Experts who believe, investors will still find 8% offered for bank deposits as more attractive.
2. The present scheme will not bring out even 20 tonnes of gold.
3. Investors fear that the tax department will hound them questioning the source of gold.

Okay! But tell me how good are they from investment point of view?

1. A section of experts feel the interest rates being offered (on both deposits and bonds) are attractive.
2. For people who have gold as an investment asset, it is a good opportunity to gain some interest out of it.
3. Gold is always written off as a **zero-yield instrument** compared to equities, which give dividend and fixed income which gives fixed interest.

From now on, gold will not only be an instrument of security but will also give earnings and will become part of nation building. 



join the conversation on this explainer ONLINE.

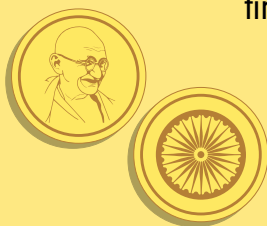
GOLD SCHEMES

Huge gold imports pushed India's **current account deficit** (CAD) to a record \$190 billion in 2013. The government wants to reduce the reliance on **gold imports** over time by bringing tones of gold from households into banking system

1

India Gold coin & Bullion scheme

first ever national gold coin minted in India



with advanced **anti-counterfeit features** and **tamper proof packaging** that will aid easy recycling

2

Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), 2015

It allows to earn some regular **interest of up to 2.5%** on your gold (No maximum limit for deposit) and save you carrying costs as well



*It replaced the **existing Gold Deposit Scheme, 1999***

3

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme

Investors (**resident Indian ONLY**) can earn an interest rate of **2.75% per annum** by buying paper bonds.



can be used as **collateral for loans** and can be sold or traded on stock exchanges

The Bonds will be eligible for **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)**

Swachh Bharat Cess

What is a Cess?

Cess is a tax on tax, **temporary levied** by the govt. to achieve a **specific objective**. Generally, it is expected to be levied till the time the govt. gets enough money for that purpose.

For instance, the **education cess**, that is levied currently, is meant to finance basic education in the country.

What is the quantum of revenue generated through Cess?

- The **education and higher education cesses** are budgeted to bring approx. Rs 30,000 crore this year.
- The road cess on petroleum is budgeted to net just under Rs 50,000 crore.
- There is also a cess on exports, clean energy, etc.

The total amount from cesses is Rs 1.16 lakh crore.

What is the criticism against Cesses?

- The problem with cesses is that it becomes **permanent** in nature.
- These levies are **back door entry** instead of levying taxes.

How Cess is different from Surcharge?

Surcharge is also a tax on tax, which is imposed on incomes above a certain level with a view to **reduce the inequalities** further.

- There is a surcharge of **12% on individuals** whose taxable income exceeds Rs. 1 crore.
- Similarly, there is also a surcharge of **10% on the domestic companies** whose taxable income exceeds Rs.10 crore, and also a surcharge of **5% on the foreign companies** whose taxable income exceeds Rs.10 crore.

What is Swachh Bharat Cess?

The resources generated from the cess will be utilised for **financing and promoting initiatives** towards Swachh Bharat. It is a step towards involving each and every citizen in making **contribution** to Swachh Bharat.

- Govt. has introduced a cess of 0.5% on all services and 2% on air services.
- The revenue department is preparing a **list of services** which will attract the additional 2% cess provided for in the Budget 2015-16, over and above the proposed 14%.

Where does the proceeds of the Swachh Bharat Cess go?

The proceeds of the Swachh Bharat cess would be first credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India**. The govt. would be able to utilise it after due appropriation is made by Parliament by law. This will later go to **Swachh Bharat Kosh**.


The Government expects to collect around Rs 10,000 crore from Swachh Bharat cess for full year

Why does it go against the principle of fiscal federalism?

- The central divisible pool **excludes levies** classified as surcharges and cess for specific purpose.
- The **entire proceeds** would remain with the Centre and need not be compulsorily shared with the states.
- Swachh Bharat cess, to some extent, is a **vague pretext** for a cess, unlike the ones for national highways or high-speed rail corridors, which can be **more effectively implemented** at the Central level.

What will be the impact of GST on the Cess?

There is **no input credit** available on this cess, which goes against the very principle of the GST and thereby weakens the Centre's case for pushing through GST.

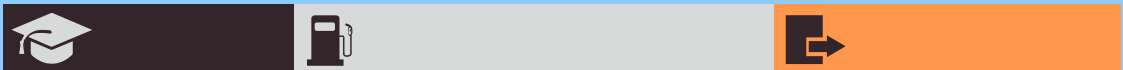
The cesses and surcharges would be **subsumed** once the GST is rolled out. So both for tax payers and states, this is for the time being. 

CESS

Cess is a tax on tax, **temporary levied** by the government to achieve a **specific objective**.



₹ 1.16 lakh crore : total amount from cesses



₹ 30,000 crore

EDUCATION
& HIGHER
EDUCATION
CESSES

₹ 50,000 crore

THE ROAD
CESS ON
PETROLEUM

THERE IS ALSO A CESS
ON EXPORTS, CLEAN
ENERGY, etc.

Generally, it is expected to be levied till the time the govt. gets enough money for that purpose, but it becomes permanent in nature.

Swachh Bharat Cess

The resources generated from the cess will be utilised for **financing and promoting initiatives** towards Swachh Bharat. It is a step towards involving each and every citizen in making **contribution** to Swachh Bharat

0.5 %
ALL
Services

2%

Air service

₹145 tax

for ₹1000 hotel bill

12% service tax

0.5%
Swachh
Bharat
cess

2% Education cess

**Swachh
Bharat
Kosh**

CREDITED TO

**The Consolidated
Fund of India**

APPROPRIATION
BY PARLIAMENT
BY LAW

Against the principle of fiscal federalism

The **entire proceeds** would remain with the
Centre and need not be compulsorily shared with
the states

P J N A Y A K W A S entrusted (by none other than Raghuram Rajan) to head an RBI committee on banking governance and present a report, which he did in style:

Do you know why banks were nationalised way back in Indira Gandhi's time?

And why it might still be a good idea (according to government) to keep control over them?

PJ Nayak Committee for Banking reforms

P J NAYAK AND HIS BANKING GOVERNANCE

YET ANOTHER
COMMITTEE?
R U GUYS KIDDING ME!
WHAT DOES RBI WANT FROM
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS
NOW?

UH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN!
I THOUGHT NATIONALISATION OF
BANKS WAS A GOOD MOVE?

WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE? CAN
YOU GIVE ME A HEADS UP IN
QUICK BULLET POINTS?



MR. MODI

THE BANKS ARE STIFLING SIR!
GOVERNMENT BEING >50% OWNER IS
IMPINGING OVER THE FUNCTIONAL
AUTONOMY OF BANKS AND MORE...

IT WAS, IT WAS.
BUT IT'S BEEN AGES AND THAT MOVE HAS
OUTLIVED ITS UTILITY, WE THINK.

LET'S BEGIN BY CREATING AN
INTERMEDIATE HOLDING
COMPANY (BANKING
INVESTMENT COMPANY) WHICH
HOLDS ALL YOUR SHARES...



P J NAYAK

YOU KNOW WHY >50% SHAREHOLDING IS A BAD IDEA?

COZ, GOVT. OWNS >50% OF THE BANKING GOVERNANCE, THERE ARE NO RISK TAKERS IN THE LEADERSHIP TEAM!

THEY STAY CLOSE TO THE "GOOD BOOKS" OF GOVERNMENT.

PRIVATE BANKS ARE ONLY MONITORED BY RBI.

BUT SARKARI BANKS - CAG, CVC, RTI... YOU NAME IT AND THEY HAVE IT AS THEIR OVERHEAD MONITORS!

IN SARKARI BANK, CHAIRMAN'S PAY IS NOT LINKED WITH PROFITABILITY!

ALL HE HAS TO DO IS PLEASE THE HIGHER UPS AND TAKE NO RISKS!

THAT'S
CRAZY!

I HAVE 4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE



RECOMMENDATION #1

IT WILL BE GREATLY HELPFUL IF GOVERNMENT'S (EQUITY) SHARE IN BANKS COMES DOWN TO LESS THAN 50 PER CENT.

RECOMMENDATION #2

PLEASE REPEAL THE BANK NATIONALISATION ACT AND PROVIDE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BANKS!

For newly enthused aspirants, it might be a good idea to go figure the pros and cons of such heavy oversight of FinMin – RBI – CAG – CVC over public sector companies in general (banks or otherwise).

RECOMMENDATION #3

FORMATION OF A
"BANK INVESTMENT
COMPANY" (BIC) UNDER
THE COMPANIES ACT, AS
I JUST MENTIONED.

RECOMMENDATION #4

PSB(S) KEEP ON
INVESTING IN G-SECS
(WHICH PAY ONLY ~8% IN
RETURN) IN THE PRETEXT
OF SAFE INVESTMENTS!


RECOMMENDATION #4

THIS LEADS TO FISCAL REPRESSION


WHICH ESSENTIALLY MEAN THAT YOU FORCE THE
GOVT BANKS INTO BUYING ONLY THE G-SECS AND
THEY ARE NEVER ABLE TO LIVE UP TO...

...THEIR FULL POTENTIAL!



If you were to represent government's interest here, what would your rebuttal be? Take a hint from the its seven-pronged strategy called 'Indradhanush' to revamp public-sector banks. P J Nayak wasn't very happy with that! 

Polity



**43 newscards | Hand curated
summaries
of the most
relevant news
items from
Polity**

[b2b] What is Beat Policing?

- The Beat policing is a concept where a law enforcement officer **walks, rides, cycles, or drives** in a specific area, which is called as his or her beat.
- The beat police apart from giving a sense of **security** to the citizens, was also an important source of information.
- The II ARC feels that this system needs to be **restored** and strengthened.

[b2b] Let's know about COPD?

- COPD is a **non-communicable lung disease** that progressively robs sufferers of breath.
- COPD is caused by tobacco, smoking, biomass fuel smoke and exposure to industrial pollution, fumes and environmental pollutants.
- Studies indicate that **25-50%** of people with clinically COPD don't even know they have it.
- That is because the early stages of COPD are often unrecognised.

Now, COPD to take your breath away

- Some recent studies have indicated that **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**, a progressive disease that makes it hard to breathe is on the rise in the Capital.
- Doctors in the city are now being advised to identify and counsel patients who visit them with the problem.
- According to experts, after pollution, lack of awareness about this condition is the major reason for increased risk of COPD deaths.

Chennai's new strategy to eliminate TB

- With this project, Chennai may drastically **reduce TB mortality**, shrink the number of new cases annually and impact TB prevalence in the city in a matter of 3-5 years.
- The Zero TB Cities project earnestly embraced the Zero TB Declaration in 2012, that calls for a "new global attitude" in the fight against TB.
- The project envisages a comprehensive tuberculosis elimination strategy at the **community level** by using all the currently available arsenals.

- The "island of elimination" strategy does not call for any breakthroughs but requires a **change of mindset**.

Focus now is on counter-radicalisation

- A **three-pronged approach** being followed by Home Ministry to address the issue of radicalisation.
- The govt. has asked all States to step up **beat-policing** for ground-level **intelligence**.
- Special emphasis is being laid on **identifying and accounting** for the missing youth in the locality.
- The agencies are acting behind the curtain to **discourage** young Muslim men and women from being attracted to the IS.

SC agrees to hear petition on de-criminalisation of politics

- The SC agreed to hear a petition seeking to **de-criminalise and de-communalise** politics through electoral reforms.
- The plea demands **lifetime ban** on convicted persons from contesting polls, forming a political party or becoming party office-bearers.
- The petition questions that why only a **6-year ban** on persons convicted of serious crimes and corruption.
- It also asks for **min. qualification and max. age** limit mandatory criteria for contesting Parliament/ Assembly election.

All States but T.N. to roll out Food Security Act by April

- All States, except TN are ready for **implementing** the National Food Security Act by April next year.
- Till now, 22 States and UTs have **rolled out** the Act which covers up to 67% of the population.
- It is mandatory for the States and UT to **adopt digital identification** of the beneficiaries, arrange for **doorstep delivery of foodgrains** and constitute **grievance redressal cells** before they roll out the scheme.
- It was mandatory to **install e-PoS machines** backed with Aadhaar identification to ensure that discounted grains reached the beneficiary.

HRD Ministry sets up exclusive panel on Sanskrit promotion

- The Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry has constituted a 13 member expert committee exclusively on Sanskrit.
- In its attempt to revive interest in the ancient Indian classical language Sanskrit.
- The expert committee would be headed by former chief election commissioner (CEC) **N Gopalaswami**.
- It will suggest changes in **Sanskrit education** in schools and universities and ways to impart Sanskrit education through modern tools.
- This Committee also has been tasked to chart out an action plan to develop the language in the next 10 years.

Bengal government to train quacks as health workers

- The WB govt. has decided to train **informal health care providers**, referred to as quacks, operating in rural areas of the State.
- They will be acknowledged as **village health workers** with clear delineation of the care that they can provide.
- A **standard operating procedure** will be prepared in consultation with clinical pharmacologist, physician, surgeon and administrators.
- This is a very positive step as informal health care providers operating in rural areas needs to be **integrated to the health system**.

[b2b] Let's get know about CCTNS project ?

- CCTNS is initiated in **2009** which aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of **policing** at Police Station level.
- Adoption of principles of **e-Governance**, and creation of nationwide networked infrastructure for evolution of **IT-enabled state-of-the-art tracking** system.
- CCTNS is a **Mission Mode Project** (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan of Govt. of India.

- The Project interconnects about 15000 Police Stations and additional 5000 offices of supervisory police officers.
- It will digitize the data related to FIR registration, investigation and charge sheets in all Police Stations.

Extension of CCTNS Project

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved a proposal for major revamp of Crime and Criminals Tracking Network and Systems (**CCTNS**) Project.
- It has decided to implement **Integrated Criminal Justice System** (ICJS) by integrating CCTNS with **E-Courts**.
- This will ensure quick data transfer among different pillars of criminal justice system, which **enhances transparency** and reduce processing time.
- **Police-Citizen interface** will undergo a major shift with implementation, as number of services will be enabled through **citizen portal**.
- Government decided to **fast track** the implementation and completion of CCTNS project by **March 2017** including implementation of ICJS.

Cabinet approves setting up of National Resource Facility for Bio-medical Research (NARF)

- Institution will be **first of its kind** for quality laboratory animals for basic and applied **biomedical research** in country.
- It will be developed as a world-class facility for **breeding and housing of animals**.
- Such as primates, canines and other specialized models such as transgenic and knockout rodents required for testing of various R&D products.
- Facility will create, develop and provide access to a range of laboratory animals and technological resources for advancement of biomedical research in country.

Dissent in 7th pay panel over edge for IAS and IFS

- Seventh Pay Commission, chaired by **Justice A.K. Mathur**, will submit recommendations.
- For an average **15-16% increase** in pay, allowances and pensions for Central government employees.
- It is lower than the 20% suggested by the 6th Pay Commission.
- Commission will submit a recommendation on an alternative approach to the **one rank one pension** for defence personnel.
- The cost of the recommendations, if accepted, works out to **0.6% of GDP** in the 1st year of implementation.

Cabinet okays Rs.2,000-cr. package for Kashmiri migrants' rehabilitation

- Cabinet approved Rs. 2,000 crore for the **rehabilitation of Kashmiris** who moved to different parts of India in the early 1990s and began to be recognised as migrants.
- It will encourage a **positive change** in the conflict-torn region and possibly **repair ties** between the Muslim and Pandit communities of Kashmir.
- The money is specifically meant for the people who are registered as residents of **Kashmir province**.
- It will benefit registered **Kashmiri migrant families** numbering 62,000 and residing in Jammu, Delhi and NCR.
- For Jammu and Ladakh provinces, a **separate allocation** would be approved in the next phase.

Centre sets up panel to review Garo Hills security

- The Centre informed the Meghalaya HC that a committee has been set up to review the security situation **Garo Hills districts**.
- Earlier, the HC issued an order directing the Centre to consider the use of the **AFSPA** and deployment of **armed** and **paramilitary** forces.
- HC wanted to control the **deteriorating law and order** situation in the Garo Hills.
- The committee will review the **security situation** in the Garo Hills and on the **India-Bangladesh border** (in Meghalaya).

India tops child deaths due to pneumonia and diarrhoea: study

- India carries the highest burden of pneumonia and diarrhoea deaths in children, latest report of John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health said.
- In 2015, a projected 2.97 lakh pneumonia and diarrhoea deaths are estimated in children aged less than five in the country.
- Of the projected 5.9 million deaths of children (aged less than five) in 2015 across the world.
- Pneumonia was the top killer at **16%**, while diarrhoea came second at **9%** share globally.
- India had fallen short of the MDG targets of reducing under five-year-olds' child mortality by two-thirds from 1990 till 2015.

[b2b] Let's know about Competition Commission of India?

- **Statutory body** established under **The Competition Act of 2002**.
- It was established in 2003 and became fully functional in 2009.
- To eliminate practices that adversely affect **competition** in different industries and protect interests of consumers and ensure **freedom of trade**.
- Its predecessor was the **MRTPC** (Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission) was functional prior to 1991 economic reforms.

Intensify NOTA promotion for local body elections: Gujarat HC to SEC

- The Gujarat HC directed the State Election Commission (SEC) to further **promote the NOTA option** among the voters in the coming local body polls.
- Earlier, the HC had ordered the SEC to bring the NOTA option for the voters.
- State govt. was asked to **assist the commission** to create awareness among the voters.
- Poll panel had informed court about **promotional activities** through TV, radio, newspapers.

NSCN factions making inroads in Arunachal

- The framework peace agreement signed by the NDA govt. with the NSCN(IM) is haunting the govt. again!
- Two other factions — the Khole-Kitovi and Reformation — were not part of the initiative.
- Recently, MHA has extended the imposition of the AFSPA in 3 districts of Arunachal Pradesh by another 6 months as these two breakaway factions were making inroads in the State.

Asia's foremost Information Security Conference: Ground Zero Summit, 2015

- Theme for the Summit is Digital India – 'Securing Digital India'.
- Summit is organized by the **Indian Infosec Consortium (ICC)**.
- ICC wants to consolidate the cyber security resources in country and protect its cyberspace.
- Summit will showcase indigenous cyber security products and technologies and **Make in India Exhibition** of Indian cyber security start-ups

Now, 0.5% cess on services to support Swachh Bharat

- Government imposed two new levies, a **0.5%** Swachh Bharat Cess on all services, now liable to service tax.
- A **2%** regional connectivity cess on international air travel and flights between metros and big cities.
- The decision will increase the service tax outgo on insurance premiums, air fares and cell phone bills.
- Cess for the creation of the **Regional connectivity fund (RCF)** corpus will be levied to enable the regional connectivity scheme.
- Scheme provides for **viability gap funding (VGF)** for operating small aircraft to small towns.

[b2b] Did you know about AYUSH ?

- **Ministry of AYUSH** is formed in 9th November **2014** for providing more healthcare to the public.
- Department of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy (ISMandH) was created in March 1995 and renamed as **AYUSH in 2003**.

- AYUSH is Department of **Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy**(AYUSH).
- It provides focused attention to development of Education and Research in AYUSH systems.

[b2b] What is drug price control?

- The Centre issued Drugs (Price Control) Order, 2013 to regulate the prices of drugs.
- It initially brought under price control 652 medicines or formulations based on 348 bulk drugs listed under the National List of Essential Medicines.
- The ceiling price of essential medicines has been fixed based on the weighted average of the prices (MRP) of all brands of that drug that have a market share of at least 1%.
- If any medicine is priced lower than the ceiling fixed by the regulator, then companies selling such drugs should maintain the existing or lower retail price.

[b2b] What is the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act ?

- It Empowers armed forces to deal effectively in **'Disturbed Areas'** declared by both state and Central government.
- Parliament had enacted it in 1958 to provide special legal security to the armed forces in the troubled areas of 7 sisters states of **North east**.
- Extended to **Jammu and Kashmir in 1990** in order to confront the rising insurgency in the area.
- It has withdrawn from **Tripura in 2015**.

Impose AFSPA in Garo Hills, says High Court

- Meghalaya HC asked Central Government to enforce Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958 in **militancy-hit Garo Hills** region of the state.
- It observed in order to deploy armed forces to aid of civil administration **to restore public order** and maintain the law and order.
- Recently the Meghalaya state is witnessing a rise in number of **militancy incidents** especially in Garo Hills.

President to launch IIT-IISc joint initiative on research

- President to launch an **IMPRINT India** initiative to develop a road map for research in country.
- The initiative will pave the way for **solutions** to major engineering and technology challenges.
- IMPRINT India is a **pan-IIT and IISc** joint collaboration to develop a blueprint for research of immediate relevance to society.
- IMPRINT India will focus on **10 themes** and each theme will be coordinated by one IIT/IISc.

There will be no wholesome change in Collegium system, says SC

- Constitution Bench led by **Justice J S Khehar** was categorical in making it known to the government that although it had **invited suggestions** to improve the system.
- It is not going to be a wholesome change. It has to be within the parameters (evolved by **nine judges in 1990s**).
- SC would address four specific issues, **transparency, eligibility criteria** for appointments, setting up a **secretariat of Collegium** and a **complaint redressal** mechanism.
- Government sought a role for the President and the PM in the appointment process, saying nominations for appointment as a SC judge may also be made by them.

Impose AFSPA in Garo Hills, says High Court

- Meghalaya HC has asked the Centre to consider enforcing AFSPA in the **militancy-hit** Garo Hills region in the State.
- It wants deployment of **armed and para-military forces** to control the situation in the aid of civil and police authorities.
- This comes at a time when there is a growing demand to **revoke** this **draconian law** from several States.

Cabinet decides to set up Kapu quota commission

- Commission will **study the modalities of extending reservation in education and employment** to the numerically strong community.
- It suggests measures to avoid running into any legal hurdles.
- It allocate Rs.100 crore for different welfare measures exclusively for **Kapus** and regular financial support.
- It considers including more administrative units in the list of **drought-affected mandals**.

5-member panel proposed to decide monetary policy

- Government will nominate two members and the **RBI three members**.
- Each of five members have **one vote** and the RBI Governor, chair of the committee, will have a **casting vote** in the event of a tie in situations such as the absence of a member.
- **Inflation target** for the RBI in each financial year will be determined by the Government in consultation with the RBI itself.
- At present, the Governor is advised by a technical committee but can veto decisions, being singularly responsible for monetary policy.

Govt. forms committee to review drug pricing policy

- Inter-ministerial committee to review the **Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 2013**,
- Following Supreme Court verdict that termed drug pricing policy as **irrational and unreasonable**.
- The committee look into the **pricing** of medicines, and specifically in the **market based pricing** formula which is being used at present under DPCO 2013.

Give NOTA option in civic polls: Gujarat HC

- The HC directed the State Election Commission to **implement the NOTA** option in the municipal and panchayat elections in the State.
- The State poll panel was **reluctant** to implement the option.
- The Bench also modified its previous order that stayed a plan for **compulsory voting** in these polls.

First affordable housing projects under Housing for All Mission

- The Centre has approved state government's proposals for building 26,034 houses in 11 cities and towns in the state.
- Housing for All scheme, which proposes to build **2 crore houses across the nation by 2022**.
- The scheme will be implemented as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, except the credit linked subsidy component, which will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme.

Nutrition bureau axed, anti-poverty schemes starved

- Reason to shut down, as bureau was running in project mode and Government programmes that run in a project mode for this long are not sustainable.
- NNMB provides a good understanding of what people eat and what, therefore, can be culturally accepted **nutritional interventions**.
- NNMB plays a very important role in projecting data in terms of what people are eating.
- The data gathered by the NNMB informs the **policy intervention to address under-nutrition**.

Call drop penalty to stay for now, says TRAI Chief

- TRAI said, regulations are valid as of now and operators should ready their systems to comply with them from January 1.
- The regulator will examine the issue raised by the industry, post which a final decision will be taken.
- An impression is being created that the authority has imposed this regulation without considering the **technical feasibility of its operation**.
- Authority will examine legally if it can review the decision or not and then decide the course of action.

Govt. limits surrogacy to infertile Indian couples

- Centre has told the SC that govt. does not support **commercial surrogacy** as a policy.
- It would make such **exploitation** of women and children wombs **punishable** under the law.

- Surrogacy would be **altruistic** and not commercial, and limited to infertile Indian married couples and not to **foreigners**.
- This provision would be part of The **Assisted Reproductive Techniques** (Regulation) Bill, 2014.
- The govt. was against the import of **human embryo** for surrogacy purposes.

In national interest, scrap quota in higher education institutions: SC

- Regretting that some "**privilege remains unchanged**" even after 68 years of independence.
- National interest requires doing away with all forms of reservation in institutions of higher education.
- To **make merit the primary criteria** for admissions into super-specialty courses, the ground reality remains that reservation often holds sway over merit.

IITs asked to partner industries for funding research projects

- Mandate is to train very **high quality manpower** and produce outcomes that are relevant for the **design and manufacturing industry**.
- IITs can soon start applying for government money to **fund research**. HRD Ministry earmarked Rs.250 crore per annum for fostering "very high quality" research in the IITs.
- Under '**Uchatar Avishkar Yojana**', which will have industry partners with the institutions of excellence.
- This proposal will shift the focus from **fundamental research to applied research**.

Info panel turning down more RTI requests now

- The Central Information Commission has admitted **fewer and fewer cases** every month this year, under the RTI Act.
- RTI activists have asked for **greater transparency** in the process of turning down requests.
- There are two ways in which cases come before the CIC.
- If an applicant is not satisfied with the verdict of the **first appeal** made to the authority concerned.
- If a citizen has a complaint that his request was not taken or **wrong information** was given.

Could bringing the present collegium system under RTI strengthen it?

- Suggestions comes out that the judicial administration should be brought under the **purview of the RTI Act, 2005**, to ensure transparency in the judicial system.
- Though the NJAC has been held as unconstitutional as a whole, the judiciary has not failed to acknowledge flaws in the prevailing collegium system.
- By opaque nature of the collegium system, the first step anticipated in making the system transparent would be to bring it under the **ambit of the RTI Act**.
- Bringing RTI of collegium into effect would ensure that reasons for non appointment are recorded leading to fair appointments.

PMO to identify, nurture Indian equivalent of Google or GE

- The PMO will take on the task of identifying and **nurturing an idea** with the potential to be an Indian enterprise equivalent of Google or GE.
- The plan is part of the proposed overhaul of the **innovation ecosystem** in the country under the Atal Innovation Mission(AIM).
- The AIM seeks to **combine innovators** from universities, consultants and private sector enterprises with those in government.
- The organisation will identify **critical path breaking innovations** and implement in coordination with the NITI Aayog and the PMO.

Processed meat can cause cancer in humans: WHO

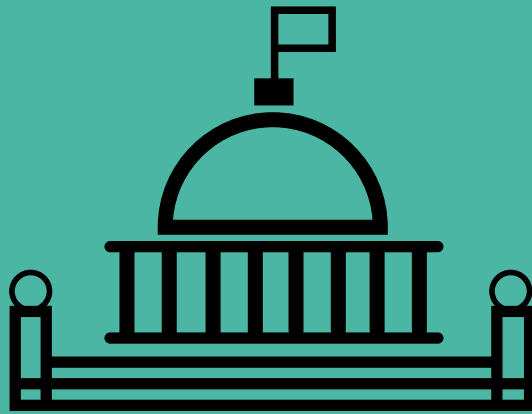
- The World Health Organization (WHO) flagged cancer risks from processed meat and red meat.
- International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) under WHO classified processed meat products as carcinogenic to humans.
- Citing evidence that their consumption causes **colorectal cancer**.
- The agency also classified red meat as “**probably carcinogenic**” since the evidence on this count is limited.
- Colorectal cancer (aka colon cancer) is the development of cancer in the colon or rectum (parts of the large intestine).

Vacant posts in all SIC benches may render RTI Act toothless: Report

- The Right to Information Act seems to have become a **victim of govt. apathy** .
- There is **35% vacancies** in all benches of the Maharashtra State Information Commission (SIC) and reluctance from senior officers to take up role of Information Officers.
- As mandated by the RTI Act, the SIC benches hear the second appeals filed by the applicants and pass orders which are **quasi-judiciary in nature** .
- RTI activists said that **lack of suo motu declaration** of information, is one of the major reasons for more number of appeals.

NJAC : A Triumphant Verdict

INSTEAD OF SEEING the NJAC verdict as one that leads to a *confrontation between the Parliament and the judiciary*, the executive must use this as an opportunity to help the Supreme Court in preparing an *institutional design so that appointments are fair and transparent*.



The Supreme Court pronounced its verdict on the *99th Constitution Amendment Act* and the *National Judicial Appointments Commission* (NJAC), declaring them to be ultra vires the Constitution.

Questions on judicial review

The reaction of the executive to the NJAC verdict raises the fundamental question,

“Should the exercise of power of judicial review depend upon the will of the Parliament?”

Indian Constitution, unlike the Constitutions of USA and Australia, does not have an express provision of separation of powers but its sweep, operation and visibility are not unclear.

While it is the Parliament’s prerogative to amend the Constitution and make laws, the duty to decide whether the basic elements of the constitutional structure have been transgressed has been placed on the judiciary.

The power to strike down offending amendments to the Constitution on the touchstone of **basic structure** can be exercised **by the superior judiciary alone**, uninfluenced by the will of the Parliament.

Our Constitution has given the power of **judicial review** to the unelected superior judiciary to declare ‘unconstitutional’ a legislative act, once it is found to be **violative of the basic structure**.

What remains of democracy if there is no rule of law?

The institutional arrangement at the heart of our democracy provides that the **will of the people**, as reflected in the decisions their elected representatives, is subject to the will of the Constitution, as reflected in the decisions of an independent judiciary.

Parliamentary supremacy refers to the power of Parliament to make laws within the limits imposed by the Constitution.

It also denotes the supremacy of Parliament over the executive, primarily through the **accountability** of the Council of Ministers to Parliament.

All the three organs of the state derive the power and jurisdiction from our Constitution. Each must operate within the sphere allotted to it.

Judicial function is also a very important sovereign function of the state and provides the foundation for rule of law.

Is it good that judges appoint Judges in India?

It is not wholly correct to say that judges appoint judges in India as consultative participation of the executive is present in the institutionalised procedure prescribed after the Third Judges case.

But assuming it to be so, ours is perhaps the only country where the **government is the biggest litigant before the courts, Isn’t it?**

Why is this so?

We are one of the very few countries where actions of the political executive in diverse fields, ranging from violation of human rights to wrongful distribution of natural resources and wide range of issues which have huge political ramifications, are brought before the superior judiciary in the public interest litigation (PIL).

Can judges who are appointed with the direct say of the government be relied upon to deliver neutral and high-quality decisions in such matters?

It is no exaggeration to say that appointment processes shape the ability of courts to hold political institutions to account.

Veto to non-judicial members

In the Second Judges case, the nine-judge Bench expositied that appointment of judges to High Courts and the Supreme Court forms an integral part of the basic structure of our Constitution.

Therefore, the executive cannot interfere with the primacy of judiciary in the matter of appointments.

The NJAC’s flawed composition consisted of the fact that it merged certain components, reflected in the inclusion of Law Minister and two eminent persons and giving any two members the power to veto the decision of the other four.

This directly affected **the independence of judiciary** in the judicial appointments process.


Way Forward to Fair and Transparent system


Democratic values are strengthened not only by a strong legislature but also by a strong judiciary so that together a mutually respectful and independent partnership on the public's right to justice is maintained.

The judges who delivered the judgment in the NJAC case also hold the view that an improvement in the working of the collegium system is the need of the hour.

Demands of the Constitution can override the wishes of the people expressed through elected governments.

These are at the very core of a democratic commitment to **judicial independence and constitutional supremacy**.

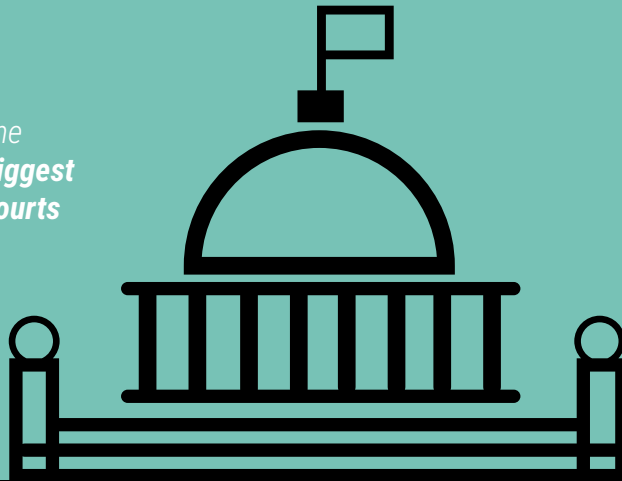


In the words of Alexander Hamilton, one of the framers of American Constitution, “where the will of the legislature declared in the statutes is in opposition to the Constitution, the judges ought to be governed by the latter, rather than former.” 

NJAC

Our Constitution has given the power of **JUDICIAL REVIEW** to the unelected superior judiciary to declare 'unconstitutional' a legislative act, once it is found to be **VIOLATIVE OF THE BASIC STRUCTURE**.

ours is perhaps the only country where the government is the biggest litigant before the courts



APPOINTMENT PROCESSES SHAPE THE ABILITY OF COURTS TO HOLD POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS TO ACCOUNT

The **NJAC's flawed composition** : the inclusion of Law Minister and two eminent persons and giving any two members the power to veto the decision of the other four.




The judges who delivered the judgment in the NJAC case also hold the view that **an improvement in the working of the collegium system is the need of the hour.**

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY are at the very core of a democratic commitment

"where the will of the legislature declared in the statutes is in opposition to the Constitution, the judges ought to be governed by the latter, rather than former."

- **Alexander Hamilton** one of the framers of American Constitution

World



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[b2b] What is H-1B Visa?

- The H-1B visa is a **non-immigrant visa** that allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise in specialised fields.
- Applying for this visa is generally quicker than applying for a US Green Card.
- Therefore the H-1B visa is popular for companies wishing to bring in staff for long-term assignment in the US.

Milestone for H-1B, a passport to the American dream

- A **digital arts exhibition** on the H-1B visa has opened at the world's largest museum in the U.S. to mark the 25th anniversary of the popular **work permit** falling on November 29.
- South Asian and Asian American artists explore America's **immigration story** through this visa.
- Our H-1B visa exhibition explores a historic part of the American story from the perspective of South Asian Indians.

India, Singapore enter into strategic tie-up

- India and Singapore signed a joint declaration envisaging a **Strategic Partnership**, broadening engagement in existing areas of cooperation.
- It aims to **catalyse** areas ranging from political, defence and security cooperation to economic, cultural and people-to-people contacts.
- The two countries signed 10 bilateral agreements, to contribute to greater regional stability and growth.
- MoUs were signed for curtailing **drug trafficking** and improving cyber security, and collaboration on technology and research.

Obama, Hollande seek shift in Russian strategy before joint action

- U.S. and France would like Russia to be part of their **joint efforts** to fight the IS.
- But, they want Russia to prove its **credentials** by giving up its support to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

- They acknowledge that Russia's **military capabilities** and their influence on Assad, can help the fight against IS.
- Mr. Obama defended the Turkish strike that brought down the Russian plane, saying every country has a right to **protect its territory and its airspace**.

[b2b] Let's know about Special Drawing Rights(SDR)?

- The SDR is an international **reserve** asset, created by the IMF in **1969** to supplement its member countries' official reserves.
- Its value is based on a basket of 4 key international currencies, and SDRs can be exchanged for freely usable currencies.
- SDRs are the IMF's unit of account **restricted to its members**.
- Today the SDR basket consists of the **euro, Japanese yen, pound sterling, and U.S. dollar**.

[b2b] What are the disadvantages of dollar's hegemony in world?

- The world financial order is heavily skewed in favour of the dollar.
- About **62%** of international currency assets are held in dollars.
- A miniscule rise in the American interest rate or even a talk about it is enough to **cause huge upheavals** in the markets of developing countries such as India's.
- There are **limits** to the Federal Reserve's capacity to **meet liquidity shortages** in the global economy.
- The American political system is **dysfunctional**.

Implications of yuan's rise

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** is poised to approve the **inclusion of China's renminbi** (or yuan as it is called) as a reserve currency.
- When the yuan is formally inducted into the **SDR portfolio**, it will be the first new currency to be so honoured since the euro was created.
- The important advantage accruing to China is the flexibility in settling all its international obligations with its own currency.

- For other countries, the benefit in having another reserve currency is that they can **diversify their forex reserve** portfolios to include renminbi.

India, Malaysia vow to strengthen defence ties

- India and Malaysia have agreed to strengthen their **defence cooperation**, including improved **maritime security** and **disaster response** in the region.
- The two countries have upgraded our **joint exercises** and set up the **SU-30 Forum**.
- Mr. Modi reiterated that the **trade and investment relations** between the two countries could be scaled up significantly.
- The MoUs pertain to **cybersecurity**, cooperation in management, delivery and monitoring of **govt. programmes** and **cultural exchanges**.

ASEAN to ease travel, mobility of labour

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) was proclaimed a **community** through a declaration signed by the ASEAN leaders at its **27th Summit**.
- The focus of **ASEAN 2025** will be on strengthening the community on political, economic and socio-cultural fronts.
- While the Political-Security Community aims at maintaining the association's centrality in regional mechanisms.

[b2b] Why East Asia Summit (EAS)?

- East Asia Summit is a unique Leaders-led forum of 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region.
- Formed with objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity.
- EAS is an initiative of ASEAN and is based on the premise of the centrality of ASEAN.
- Established in 2005, EAS allows the principal players in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues of common interest.

Give no shelter to terrorists: PM Modi

- Prime Minister says the world is coming together to use "force" to fight the menace.
- PM Narendra Modi suggested a multi-pronged approach for combating **international terrorism**.
- Making an intervention at the **East Asia Summit (EAS)**.
- He emphasised the need for building a new global resolve and new strategies for combating terrorism, without balancing them against political considerations.
- He said, terror was the biggest problem faced by the world today and stressed the need for delinking religion from terror.

[b2b] Let's dive into ASEAN ?

- ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, **Thailand**, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).
- By the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Aims at accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, protection of regional peace and stability.
- India is the **sixth largest trade partner** for ASEAN.
- Negotiations on a **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** Agreement expected to be concluded in 2016.

ASEAN-India Summit: Terrorism, trade, sea dispute to be top agenda

- Terrorism, trade and South China Sea dispute are expected to dominate discussions at the **13th ASEAN-India Summit**.
- The 10 member grouping will review the new Plan of Action (2016-2020).
- To further enhance ASEAN-India cooperation along politico- security, economic and socio-cultural pillars.
- India and ASEAN have 30 dialogue mechanisms including a Summit and 7 Ministerial meetings with various ministries.
- Trade between India and ASEAN stood at **USD 76.52 billion** in 2014-15.

UN security council: 'US supports India's bid for permanent membership'

- US Permanent Representative to UN, Samantha Power, expressed **US government's support** for India's bid to become a permanent member at a reformed UNSC.
- She favours increased consultations between **peacekeeper troop - contributing countries** and UNSC.
- UN is going to take a call on the renewal of the mandate of some of peacekeepers.
- US strongly advocates efforts to institute periodic assessment of troops deployment in peacekeeping missions.

[b2b] What is the purpose of UNHCR?

- UN General Assembly established UNHCR on 14 December, **1950**, to help people displaced by the World War II.
- In the decades that followed, it became the principal agency that has **helped displaced people** throughout the world.
- UNHCR'S mission is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and seek lasting solutions to their plight.

UNHCR to get 2015 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace

- Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2015 will be awarded to office of **UN High Commissioner for Refugees** (UNHCR).
- In recognition of its "immense contributions" in assisting millions of **refugees** and for working under difficult circumstances.
- The prize is accorded annually to individuals or organisations in recognition of creative efforts toward promoting international peace, development and a new international economic order.
- It ensures, **scientific discoveries** are used for larger good of **humanity**, and enlarging the scope of freedom.

[b2b] Do you know IBSA Fund?

- It was set up in 2004 as one of the three pillars of cooperation under the **IBSA Dialogue Forum**.
- The other 2 pillars are consultation and coordination on global political issues and trilateral collaboration in concrete areas and projects.
- The IBSA countries contribute **US\$ 1 million** each annually to the Fund.
- The IBSA Fund undertakes development projects in **third countries**.
- Fund was conferred the **South-South Partnership Award** at 2006 UN Day event held in New York in December 2006.

Tripartite Agreement among India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) on the IBSA Fund

- Union Cabinet approved signing of Tripartite Agreement among **India, Brazil and South Africa** (IBSA), on IBSA Fund for Alleviation of **Poverty and Hunger**.
- Decision will help in strengthening the IBSA Fund which is a unique vehicle in context of South-South cooperation.

India and China link Home Ministries to counter terror

- India and China have decided to establish a **ministerial mechanism** for the first time, linking the 2 home ministries
- It will fill the vital gap in the overall **institutional architecture** of the bilateral ties.
- Both countries decided to **exchange information** on terrorist activities, terrorist groups and linkages.
- The topics include law enforcement, cyber crimes, terrorism, **trans-border crimes** and drug trafficking.
- **Communication lines** would be opened to ensure information flows on aircraft hijacking and hostage situations.

[op-ed snap] Europe's challenge

What does it mean to Paris?

- Barbaric attack on innocent citizens in Paris is meant to simultaneously be an act of **psychological terror, geopolitical strategy and ideological proclamation**.
- Challenge is not just possibility of a rightwing backlash against immigrants.
- It is the sense of **cultural pessimism** that precedes it, the kind reflected with a vastly exaggerated sense in the current toast of Paris.

India, Bangladesh agree to share militant information

- India and Bangladesh agreed to **share information** on militants, while reviewing internal security and other cross-border issues.
- It is possible to eliminate terrorism and insurgency through bilateral understanding and **intelligence sharing**.
- There was a need to **educate people** on both sides, so that they do not cross the borders and abide by all international regulations.
- Bangladesh sought Indian cooperation in cross-border **drug smuggling**.

[b2b] What is G20?

- The G20 was formed in 1999, with world's 19 largest economies, and the European Union.
- It is an international forum for governments to discuss key issues related to the **global economy**.
- As G20 is not an organisation, therefore, it does not have any **permanent secretariat** or management and administrative structure.
- There are **no formal votes** or resolutions on the basis of fixed voting shares or economic criteria.

BRICS can give shape to G20, says Modi

- The BRICS could give shape to G20, a signal from the BRICS nations to the developed countries of their **rising significance** in global matters.
- Mr. Modi demanded that the target lowering of the cost of **global remittances** be advanced to sooner than 2030.
- He also made a case for **close coordination** to prevent corruption and for cooperation to freeze unaccounted money hoarded abroad.
- He cautioned against **new trading blocs** leading to division of the global trade regime.
- He called for strengthening the **rule-based global trading system** and speeding up the completion of the Doha Development Agenda of the WTO.

G20 for joint steps to fight terrorism

- Mr. Ban stressed that world leaders need to be robust in their response which is within the **rule of law** and with respect for **human rights**.
- There was a need for close cooperation within the international community to **reject and fight** terrorism in all its manifestation.
- There was a need to address the underline drivers of **violent extremism**.

More than 140 killed in Paris terror attacks

- State of emergency declared in France after series of terror attacks kill over a 100 people across the capital.
- The attack comes as France has heightened security measures ahead of a major global climate conference that starts in two weeks.

Aung San Suu Kyi registers an emphatic win in Myanmar

- A quarter century after Myanmar's generals denied Aung San Suu Kyi an election win, she led her party to victory.
- Suu Kyi, 70, and her party (NLD) are the longtime antagonists to the **generals** who ruled Myanmar from a coup in 1962 until 2011.

The Welcome Demise of China's One-Child Policy

- October 29 marked the day when China's controversial one-child limit was finally laid to rest.
- Increasingly families were being characterized by the pressures of a 4-2-1 structure.
- **4-2-1?** Four grandparents and two parents being supported by one child.
- China has now relaxed it to two-child allowed.

[b2b] How is migrant crisis and Schengen Visa related?

- There are 26 countries in Schengen - 22 EU members and four non-EU.
- The Schengen Agreement abolished the EU's internal borders, enabling passport-free movement across most of the bloc.
- It took effect in 1995.
- **The conflict is as you can imagine** - the unbridled influx of refugees to these countries is the cause of worry for this agreement to make sense in such times!

EU free travel zone in danger

- Germany, Sweden and Slovenia acted on their own to tighten borders and slow the influx of refugees.
- One of Europe's prized benefits: the ease of travel through its Schengen is sort of becoming a trouble!
- Without effective control of external borders, Schengen will not survive.
- The Schengen travel zone involves 30 nations, including some not in the European Union.

[b2b] South China Sea dispute, can you please tell me more?

- Besides being one of the world's busiest maritime routes, the South China Sea is **rich in fish stocks as well as oil and gas** deposits.
- China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan, and Malaysia **all have overlapping claims in the sea.**
- Of course, as you would have imagined, China went on to redraw the map and sketched the famous 'nine dash line' in 1947.
- China claims a larger share in the S. China sea every time it waves the '9 dash line' map!
- Unable to challenge China militarily, the Philippines turned to the international law!

U.S. expects South China Sea issue to come up at APEC Summit

- The issue is likely to come up on the sidelines of the APEC summit if it is not on the formal agenda.
- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit is scheduled for Nov. 17-19 in Manila.
- China says it is not aware of any plans to discuss the issue!

South China Sea may top Chinese General's agenda

- **But when?** Vice-Chairman of China's powerful Central Military Commission, to visit India.

Why the issue flared up again?

- Because of a recent U.S. naval patrol within 12 nautical miles of the Zhubi Reef, over which China exercises sovereignty.
- **Countries affected** by this South China Sea issue - Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan, Philippines and Brunei.

Singapore eyeing Skill India collaboration during Narendra Modi visit

- Singapore plans to hard sell the ITE concept of vocational training, aligning it with Modi's pet Skill India.
- This will resolve one of the paradoxes of India is that it has an educated population but not a skilled one.
- The other agenda will be promoting urban planning concepts, enhancing trade and investment, improving connectivity and increasing engagement with the states.

UNESCO rejects Kosovo's bid for membership

- **Kosovo, who, what?**
- Kosovo has been recognized by 111 countries since it declared independence from Serbia in 2008.
- UNESCO rules required the support of 2/3 of those voting for getting its membership.
- This is a blow to Kosovo's mission for global recognition as a state.

Pakistan invites India for key Afghan meet

- Pakistan has invited External Affairs Minister for a crucial regional conference here on Afghanistan.
- **The 'Heart of Asia' conference will be held in December.**
- India is likely to send a high-level delegation headed by the minister given the conference's importance.
- The move that could provide an opportunity for the two neighbours to mend their frosty ties.

7 South-asian nations team up to tackle black money

- They have a cool name - South Asian Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre (**SARICC**) and they are going to tackle money laundering.
- This is first time an attempt is being made to establish such a centre in South Asia.
- And no points for guessing, India is spearheading this initiative!
- Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives are also part of it.

Maldives no longer a tourist paradise

- The Maldives, the tropical nation located in the Indian Ocean, is no longer a safe destination for tourists.
- There is **no semblance of rule of law** left in this archipelago of 26 coral atolls.
- An ongoing constitutional crisis caused by an endless spiral of impeachments, constitutional amendments has **sent everything for a toss!**
- Its tranquil beaches and pristine waters are now being counted among the more dangerous places for holidayers!

Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate International Conference on Yoga

- It will see participation of 30 nationally and 16 internationally acclaimed doctors.
- It bring out the best of modern medical system of the East and the West.
- 21st International Conference on '**Frontiers in Yoga Research and its Applications**' organised from Jan 3 to 7, 2016.
- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has volunteered to scientific documentation of the researches shared during the conference.
- It aims to bring the **global yoga and medical fraternity** on a common platform and to establish working group committees.

In India, Li will ink pacts on river and culture

- The Vice-President of China will sign agreements marking cooperation on better river water management and **cultural exchanges**.
- He will preside over the renewal of the 2013 memorandum of understanding on **joint water management**.
- China have a particular interest in **Gupta empire**, as it was during this period that the **Nalanda university** prospered which later on hosted Xuanzang during his visit to India.
- There will be renewal of the MoU on smooth sharing of **hydrological data** related to the common Himalayan rivers.

[b2b] What is U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea?

- Think of it as a constitution of ocean of sorts.
- It divides the ocean waters into **5 categories**, viz. internal water, territorial water, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and high seas.
- Interestingly, the convention is silent on the **international rivers**.
- It grants full sovereign rights to do oil exploration, mineral exploration and fishing.
- In case of overlap of EEZ, the convention seeks to **mutually resolve the dispute** and demarcate the areas.
- This is the bone of contention between China and ASEAN members.

China parliament ratifies \$100 bn AIIB

- China being the largest shareholder, ratification is a significant step closer to the AIIB's formal establishment slated for the end of 2015.
- With an authorized capital of **\$100 billion**, the AIIB finance infrastructure projects like construction of roads, railways, and airports in **Asia-Pacific Region**.
- BRICS members **China, India and Russia** are the three largest shareholders.
- With a voting share of **26.06%**, **7.5%** and **5.92%**, respectively.

All countries must abide by 2002 declaration on conduct

- India expressed its interest and concern at the recent **developments** in the South China Sea.
- It called for an early conclusion of the **Code of Conduct** in the region for resolving disputes.
- The concerned countries should abide by the **2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties**.
- The 1982 **U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea** recognises freedom of navigation in international waters, the right to passage and overflight, unimpeded commerce and access to resources.

Ageing Japan goes all out to woo Indian students

- Indian students are being wooed by **Japanese universities** for taking up research in SandT with scholarships.
- This is on account of Japan's **declining young population**, of which only around 25% is showing interest in sciences.
- Japan is targeting students of IITs and other prestigious institutions with strong maths and science background.
- JICA is extending integrated support to IIT-H through **Official Development Assistance** loan of about Rs. 1,336 crore.

[op-ed snap] Raja-Mandala: Why Delhi must not be at sea

- An international court's ruling in favour of the Philippines on the maritime territorial dispute with China last week.
- Under a so-called **nine-dash line**, China claims almost the **whole of South China Sea**, dismissing claims to parts of it from **Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei**.
- China's recent aggressive land reclamation and construction projects on several reefs have spread alarm among its Southeast Asian neighbours.
- Beijing argues that its expansive claims on the South China Sea are rooted in historical facts and are "indisputable".
- Region has welcomed Delhi's expanding interest in South China Sea issues in recent years.

[b2b] What's the fuss with South China Sea?

- South China Sea is a stretch in the western Pacific Ocean and home to some of the world's busiest shipping lanes.
- More than \$5 trillion worth of international trade passes through every year, including as much as 50% of world oil tanker shipments.
- The region also contains rich fishing grounds and is believed to hold significant oil and gas deposits.
- China, Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, Brunei and Vietnam have all asserted claims over various sections of this sea!

Boost trade ties with Indonesia, says Ansari

- In 2014-15, India's total **imports** from Indonesia totalled **\$15 billion** while the exports came to just \$4 billion.
- Mr. Ansari said the **complementarities** between the two nations must be harnessed in attracting investments.
- India is the **largest buyer** of crude palm oil from Indonesia, and it also imports coal, minerals, rubber, pulp and hydrocarbons.
- India's major exports to Indonesia are **refined petroleum** products, maize, telecommunication equipment, commercial vehicles and oil seeds.

U.S. to keep operating in South China Sea

- U.S. Defence Secretary reaffirmed that the US will continue to **fly, sail and operate** wherever international law allows.
- Beijing also reiterated its position that the islets are **sovereign Chinese territory**.
- China expressed its **displeasure** with the presence of guided missile destroyer in the region.
- Earleir, US ship had sailed within **12 nautical miles** of at least one of the land formations China claims in the disputed Spratly Islands.

[op-ed snap] A string of soft pearls

- A week ago, the US allowed a warship to travel within **12 nautical miles** of the man-made island that China had created in the South China Sea.
- It was supposed to send a signal that the US did not recognize the sovereignty of China's island.
- **A Pentagon report** said that China had reclaimed more than 2,900 acres of land as of June, 17 times more land than the other claimants combined over the past 40 years.
- The US is right to be cautious and gradual in **confronting China**.

India inks energy pact with Indonesia

- Agreed on two agreements, cooperation in new and renewable energy, and renewal of the **cultural exchange programme** 2015-18.
- **Energy pact** serve commitments India and Indonesia made to reduce carbon emissions by **35 and 29%** respectively by 2030.
- Vice-President thanked Indonesia for its support in organising **Sahabat India: The Festival of India in Indonesia**'.

India pushes harder for NSG membership

- India is fast-pacing its **pitch for membership** to the 48-member nuclear club.
- The 48-member NSG works by **consensus**, and not majority, so India is reaching out to every possible country.
- Govt. is **focusing** on membership of NSG, as well as **other major groupings**: Missile Technology Control Regime, Australian and Wassenaar Arrangement.

India's APEC membership not on the agenda, says U.S.

- India's desire for **membership is not on the agenda** of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum meeting in Philippines.
- Earlier, US President had **supported** India's desire for membership of the forum during his 2015 visit.
- APEC is an organisation which is **consensus based**, so each of the APEC members has to agree to expansion of the APEC membership.
- India has been an observer at the forum since 2011 and a membership would reinforce India's **Act East Policy**.

Nepal crisis escalates after Madhesi cancel dialogue

- The United Madhesi Democratic Front **ended the national dialogue** with the govt. in an unprecedented **internationalisation** of the crisis.
- The party left for **Geneva** to present Nepal's case against the **blockade** before the **United Nations Human Rights Council** .

We were forced to secure energy deal with China

- Nepal and China have signed a **landmark energy deal** which will transform the Himalayan country's future energy scenario.
- It's a long-term pact which will free Nepal of **economic and energy dependence** on India.
- The energy deal was steamed ahead by the **acute fuel scarcity** in Nepal due to the ongoing blockade on the Nepal-India border.
- MEA said that New Delhi was ready to facilitate **airlifting** of the Aviation turbine fuel to Nepal.

NSG may admit India

- India has sought membership of the **48-member NSG** since 2008.
- But, its application hasn't been decided because signing the NPT or other nuclear moratoriums on testing is a **pre-requisite**.
- Although, India received a **special waiver** to conduct nuclear trade with all nuclear exporters.
- India is a **keyplayer in the nuclear scenario**, hence there is a recognition that some formula must be found for India.

PM offers \$10 billion credit for infrastructure projects

- Mr. Modi announced credit to Africa at **concessional rates** of \$10 billion over 5 years.
- This is in addition to about \$7.4 billion that India had already pledged since 2008.
- India will also offer a **grant assistance** of \$600 million.
- India would give **50,000 scholarships** to African students, as they will be new links between India and the African continent.

India Calls for Multilateral Funding in Science-Tech among BRICS Countries

- India supports **Multilateral Funding System**, provides basis for announcing BRICS Call for Proposal to support multi-country research projects.
- India has supported creation of BRICS Research and Innovation Networking Platform (**RINP**).
- Under which, **BRICS Innovation Corps** to be created and that an inventory of innovative products, services and solutions maintained.
- India also welcomed the proposed BRICS initiative on 'Global Research Advanced Infrastructure Network' (**GRAIN**).

TB ranks alongside HIV as leading killer worldwide: WHO report

- In 2014, tuberculosis (TB) killed 1.5 million people, 400,000 of whom were HIV-positive.
- Fight against TB is paying off, however, with this year's death rate nearly half of what it was in 1990.
- WHO's Global Tuberculosis Report 2015, most of the improvement came since 2000, the year the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) established.
- Need to close detection and **treatment gaps, fill funding shortfalls, and develop new diagnostics, drugs** and vaccines.

Nepal gets first woman President

- Nepal's Parliament elected communist lawmaker Bidhya Bhandari as the country's **first woman President** after the adoption of a landmark Constitution.
- Ms. Bhandari has served as **Defence Minister** from 2009 to 2011.
- She was hailed by campaigners for her strong stance in favour of increasing **female representation** in Parliament to 33%.
- She supported a provision in the new charter that bars Nepali single mothers and women married to foreigners from passing on **citizenship** to their children.

Sri Lanka-India bilateral maritime exercise (SLINEX)

- 4th edition of Sri Lanka-India Exercise (SLINEX) off **Trincomalee, Sri Lanka**.
- SLINEX series of **bilateral maritime exercises** were initiated in 2005.
- Indian Naval ships **Kora, Kirpan and Savitri** along with ship-borne integral helicopters entered Trincomalee.
- SLINEX promotes **mutual understanding** and provide exposure to operating procedures, communication procedures and best practices.

Nuclear pact with India to be ready soon, says Australia

- The **civil nuclear agreement** and the **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** between India and Australia would be in place soon.
- The Australian Parliament was expected to **ratify** the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement that the two countries had signed in Sep 2014.
- The CECA will principally focus on **services and investments** and will also have a respectable **goods** package.
- The investment community has a lot of **confidence** in India.

India retirement system ranks last in the global pension index

- A new Mercer report rated **Denmark** as the country with the best retirement system.
- The primary reason is its **well-funded** pension system with its good coverage, **high level of assets** and contributions and **private pension system** with developed regulations.
- **Singapore** has been ranked the highest among Asian countries.
- The Indian retirement system continues to rank last, as per 2015 **Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index** (MMGPI).

India against infrastructure projects in PoK: MEA

- With the US expressing support to Pakistan's efforts to arrange funds for the Diamer Bhasha dam in Gilgit-Baltistan, India raises a **RED FLAG!**
- The 4,500-mega watt dam project has been unable to make any headway for want of funds.
- India also expressed its reservation on US' supply of F-16 Fighter Jets.

India, Africa align on WTO issues

- Aligned on the outstanding issues at the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)** and are in favour of **multilateral trading systems**.
- The WTO Ministerial scheduled for December in Nairobi held for the **first time in Africa**.
- India's long-held position on the nation's food security policy, especially the MSP-based procurement from farmers.
- WTO has not made enough progress in finding a solution to the issue ahead of the Nairobi Ministerial.

[Op-ed snap] India and Pakistan can start opening up to trade

- One idea to resurrect the relations, a **jointly run special economic zone** on the India-Pakistan border
- This scheme would skirt several of the most contentious **trade issues**.
- To ease security concerns, goods, workers and executives going into and out of the zone could be monitored.
- The US and the European Union, for instance, might offer **tariff-free access** to any goods exported from the zone.
- Foreign companies that currently manufacture in both countries - Honda and Toyota, could be encouraged to consolidate their operations.

India-Africa Forum Summit

: Old Friends – Old Family

IT'S LIKELY TO BE the biggest diplomatic event in independent India's political history. Never have more than 39 heads of states gathered in the country.

The [India-Africa forum summit](#) on October 29, four-day summit meeting between India and **54 African nations**, aimed at deepening the spirit of partnership, strengthening international solidarity and expanding cooperation.

India hopes to create conditions that **stimulate trade and investment flows** between India and African countries.



What is India-Africa Forum Summit and how did it start?

The **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)** is a celebration of the close partnership between Africa and India, started in **2008**.

It was decided to hold the summits every three years, alternately in India and Africa. New Delhi was the venue in 2008 and Addis Ababa in 2011.

The third summit, scheduled to be held in 2014, was postponed because of the Ebola outbreak, and will now be held in Delhi from October 26 to 29.

Reasons behind such an initiative?

Economically, Africa is very resource-rich, and has moved from being an underdeveloped continent to having several **fast-growing economies, and new democracies**.

Strategically, there are key shared interests in battling **global terrorism, and piracy** in the Indian Ocean.

Politically, India's ambition to become a permanent member of the **UN Security Council** makes it imperative that it engages with all 54 countries of the continent.

New Delhi would also want a stronger partnership with Africa on climate change ahead of the **cop-21 in Paris**.

How did it help in the development process of the African continent?

In the past three years alone, 25000 Africans have been trained or educated in India. The Pan Africa e-network, which now connects 48 African countries, is becoming the new highway of regional connectivity and human development. Under the **India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** programme, over 100 officials from sub-Saharan Africa receive training annually in India.

The continent's progress will add great stability and momentum to the global economy and benefit India as well.

Why India and Africa are important for world?

India and Africa constitute one-third of the world's population. A large majority of them are in their youth.

Indeed, India and Africa will have a significant part of the global youth population in this century. Their future will shape the course of this world to a great extent.

In what ways can the New Development Bank of BRICS benefit African countries?

It has brought together the five BRICS countries (especially South Africa) as equal partners in the establishment of the Bank, which reflects a completely new paradigm of financial structure of such institutions.

It would also, hopefully, have an African window or regional presence of the Bank in the future.

Obsession with Chinese investments in Africa, Really?

World Bank estimates that private Chinese investment accounted for 55% of all Chinese direct investment in Africa by the end of 2011, with most of the spending in manufacturing and the service sector.


India seeks to challenge China's dominance on a continent that is blessed with vast natural resources and has the world's fastest-growing population.

New Delhi wants to project its soft power and historical ties to Africa, in contrast to China's focus on resource extraction and capital investment that has sparked a backlash in some countries against Beijing's mercantilist expansion.

What is on the agenda of this IAFS?

1. A forceful support for **United Nations Security Council reforms**.
2. The endorsement of India's position at the **WTO with regard to agricultural subsidies**.
3. An understanding of the African position on emerging **mega free trade agreements** like the US-led Trans Pacific Partnership.
4. Finally a '**Feel Good Factor**' to deepen diplomatic relations with African governments.

Seven of the world's fastest growing economies are now in Africa. All of this means that Africa's engagement with the world is an **opportunity for better, more equal relations**.

The Third Summit, which will see the participation of all African nations for the first time, this is an opportunity to take India's Africa policy out of **China's shadow and truly bring foreign policy home**. 

India-Africa Forum Summit

IAFS : to stimulate trade & investment flows

WHY?

#1



Resource-rich Africa has several **fast-growing economies, and new democracies**

#2



Shared interests in battling **global terrorism, and piracy** in the Indian Ocean

#3



stronger partnership with Africa on **climate change** ahead of the **COP-21 in Paris**

#4



support for **UNSC permanent membership** from 54 African countries

#5



Support for India at the **WTO with regard to agricultural subsidies**

#6



African position on emerging **mega free trade agreements** like the US-led TPP

India and Africa will have a significant part of the global youth population in this century. Their future will shape the course of this world to a great extent

It IS an opportunity for better, more equal relations.

Private chinese investment accounted for **55% of all Chinese direct investment** in Africa by the end of 2011 with focus on **resource extraction**



NOW WHAT?

*India wants to project its **soft power and historical ties to Africa***

HOW?

- 1 *In the past 3 years alone, 25000 Africans have been trained or educated in India*



Pan Africa e-network

2

- 3 *ITEC programme, over 100 officials from Africa receive training annually in India*



G20 *The Antalya Summit 2015*

G20 in a quick fast track glance

Together, the G20 economies account for –

85% of the global economic output

80% of world trade, and

65% of the global population.

Which of the 20 members make promise of inclusive and robust growth in 2015?

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Let's take a Historical dive on G20

- **The G20 was formally established on 26 September, 1999**, at the Finance Ministers' meeting of G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States) in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis.
- **The G20 convened for the first time** at the leaders' level in Washington, D.C. on November 14-15, 2008, to **respond collectively to the 2008-09 crisis**.
- In order to restore global growth, strengthen the global financial system, and reform international financial institutions.
- The G20 **played a key role in supporting the first stages of economic recovery** and continues to promote measures to reform international financial institutions, improve financial regulation, and strengthen the global economy through an increasingly comprehensive agenda.
- This year, Turkish G20 Presidency's theme is "Collective Action for Inclusive and Robust Growth".

Okay, how's the structure of G20?

- The G-20 operates without a permanent secretariat or staff. *(Take a Note of it, it may form a prelims' question)*
- The group's chair is part of a revolving three-member management group of past, present and future chairs, referred to as the "Troika".
- The role of the Troika is to ensure continuity in the G-20's work and management across host years.
- Turkey will host the 2015 summit in Antalya, while China will host the 2016 summit in Hangzhou.

Then, what is the role of Asian countries?

A 2011 report released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) predicted that large Asian economies such as China and India would play a more important role in global economic governance in future.

The report claimed that the rise of emerging market economies heralded a new world order, in which the G-20 would become the global economic steering committee.

The ADB furthermore noted that Asian countries had led the global recovery following the late-2000s recession.

It predicted that the region would have a greater presence on the global stage, shaping the G-20's agenda for balanced and sustainable growth through strengthening intraregional trade and stimulating domestic demand.

What are the significant outcomes of Turkey's G20 presidency in 2015?

#1. Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth

- Antalya Action Plan including national and global steps for strong, **sustainable and balanced growth**.
- Adjusted Growth Strategies, including policies towards inclusiveness, in line with recent economic developments.

#2. Investment and Infrastructure

- G20 Investment Strategies and G20/OECD Report on G20 Investment Strategies.
- PPP Guidelines: World Bank Group Infrastructure Deliverables.

#3. International financial Architecture

- Strong emphasis on the importance of the full implementation of the 2010 **IMF Quota** and **Governance Reform**.
- Leaders provided a strong momentum to completion of the **SDR basket review** so as the basket continues to reflect the role of currencies in the global trading and financial system.

#4. International Tax

- **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting** (BEPS) Action Plan finalised.

#5. Climate Change Finance

- Leaders committed to work together to for a successful outcome of the Cop21 and a fair, balanced, ambitious, durable and dynamic agreement.

#6. Development

- G20 and **Low Income Developing Countries** (LIDC) **Framework**
- G20 Food Security Action Plan

#7. Trade

- Statement of a strong support for a successful **WTO Nairobi Ministers Conference** with balanced outcomes on Doha Development agenda issues and guidance for post-Nairobi.
- Report on better integration of SME and LIDC's into the **Global Value Chains**.

What are India's concerns and reform agenda?

Prime Minister Modi had expressed hope earlier, that the US would ratify the **quota reforms** of the **International Monitoring Fund**, a key demand of the developing countries.

Optimistic news came about that, **G20 communique backed India** on the issue of IMF quota reforms and called for early reforms, and expressed disappointment with the delay.

Why is there need of IMF Quota review reform?

- The IMF quota reforms are aimed at **giving more voice and voting power** to the emerging economies with regard to the functioning of the multilateral body.
- Once the review takes effect, **India's share** will increase from the current **2.44% to 2.75 %**, following which the country will become the **eighth largest quota holder** at the IMF, up from the 11th position.

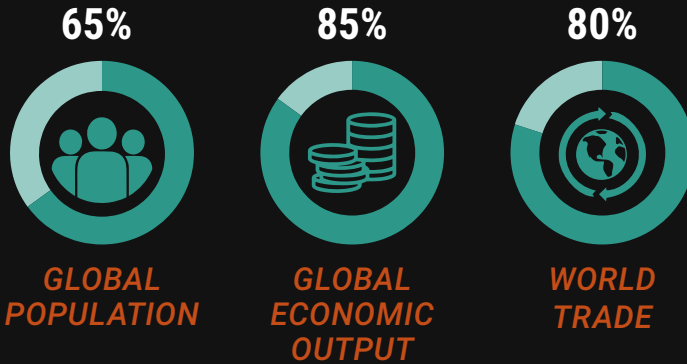
Can G20 help to resolve syrian crisis?

- The Guardian reports that Obama and Putin at G20, agreed that the United Nations will negotiate a peace deal between the Syrian government and the rebel groups.
- Putin also thanked David Cameron for sharing intelligence suggesting IS had taken down a Russian plane. Whether this means President Assad's time is up is unclear.
- We're a long way from a proper strategy to bring peace to Syria. However, Russia and the West talking is still a big step forwards.
- It also may mean countries will begin working more closely together to combat IS. May be! 

G20

Founded in 1999 to discuss policies which promote International Financial Stability

WHY?



ADB (2011) report claimed that the rise of emerging market economies heralded a new world order, in which the G-20 would become the global economic steering committee



NOW WHAT?

*global steps for strong, **sustainable and balanced** growth*

HOW?

1 IMF Quota and Governance Reform

giving more voice and voting power to the emerging economies

2.75 %

India's share will increase from the current 2.44 % (11th) to 2.75 % (8th largest quota holder)



Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action Plan finalised

2

3 Resolve Syrian Crisis

negotiate a peace deal between the Syrian government and the rebel groups



Vienna Conference

to end Syria's endless agony

What's the Vienna conference ?

The conference at Vienna on October 30, bringing together **17 states** (China, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the UK, and the US), ended with a **nine-point joint communique**.

The **United Nations (UN)** and **European Union (EU)** were also represented at the conference.

This is the **third such attempt** to hold talks to find a way **to bring to an end Syria's complicated issues**.

Historical Background

Previous two attempts, **Geneva 1** (June 2012) and **Geneva 2** (February 2014), can be correctly characterised as insincere and cynical theatre, for **4 reasons**:

- **Iran**, an important stakeholder, willing and able to frustrate any search for a **political solution** that excludes it, was not invited.
- With the **US-supported rebels** given undue weightage, not all the opposition parties in Syria were invited.
- Principal initiators, the US and Russia, more intent on scoring points over each other.
- **By inviting warring Syrian parties**, including the Bashar al-Assad regime, their external supporters found it difficult to talk frankly among themselves.
- The **exclusion of Syria** this time in Vienna is a wise step.

The highlights of the communique

Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and secular character are fundamental, and imperative to promote all efforts to end the war.

The Islamic State (IS) and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UNSC, must be defeated.

The UN is invited to convene a conference of representatives of the Syrian Government and the Opposition to start a political process leading to credible, inclusive, non-sectarian governance followed by a new constitution, and an election under the UN supervision. In parallel with political process, participants along with UN will explore modalities for a nationwide ceasefire to be effective.

What's the principal bone of contention? Is it about Assad's position?

Probably, it is the US, Saudi Arabia, and their allies who have given in. Till now, they have been repeating that Assad is not part of the solution and that the political process cannot start without his leaving office. After the Russian military intervention, **Assad's position**, from a military point of view at least, has improved. The changed US position is that Assad has to go, but not on day one the political process starts. The US has wisely changed its position. It is rather naïve to say that **if Assad steps down**, Syria will rapidly see the **end of the civil wars**.

What has been discussed in Vienna ?

- The participants at the conference were not willing to put the **ceasefire** as an immediate goal.
- It should be noted that the US announced its plans to send **Special Forces** to Syria the day the conference started.
- Further, the Saudi decision to send more and better weapons to rebels supported by it remains unchanged.
- In short, it was far from a gathering of powers with common goals keen to work together to find solutions.

What about the Islamic State (IS) ?

It will not be invited to be part of the **political process**. Nor is it likely to agree to be part of the process even if invited.

Is it the intention of some of the participants, if not all, to **reconcile Assad** and all the **non-IS rebels** and thereafter put together a grand coalition against the IS?

How long will it take to put together such a coalition assuming that an attempt will be made?

Is there a shift in the US policy ?

For Obama, it was a painful decision to send Special Forces, “less than fifty”, to Syria.

Their mission is to “**help coordinate local ground forces** and coalition efforts”.

In other words, the Special Forces will not assist forces fighting Assad’s regime.

Obama has found it difficult to answer cogently his critics at home who fault him with a **weak and incoherent** policy on Syria.

Are there any concerns from Russia’s side ?

Surely, Russia has raised concerns about a ‘**proxy war**’ and urged closer consultations with the US to take care of deconfliction.

Looking ahead, if there is no settlement before the US presidential election due in a year’s time, Obama’s successor might step up the military involvement taking the US closer to a ‘proxy war’ with Russia.

Then, has Vienna reached to a conclusion?

In conclusion, the Vienna Conference could lead over time to a ceasefire between Assad and the non-IS rebels, but it is too soon to say that it will.

The key powers adding fuel to the fire of the multiple civil wars raging in Syria have yet to reach the conclusion that it is in their interest to stop doing that.

The conference might not have been held but for the Russian bombing campaign and the inundation of Europe by refugees.

The US policy towards Syria is **slowly changing** and it is difficult to say whether it will be dragged deeper into the quagmire that Syria is.

What is painfully clear is that we all are going to witness more killing, more refugees, and more talking. Isn’t it ? It is difficult, not to recall the Roman poet Ovid’s lines penned twenty centuries ago:

*Video meliora, proboque;
deteriora sequor*

(I see better things and approve; I follow the worse) 

Vienna Conference to end Syria's endless agony

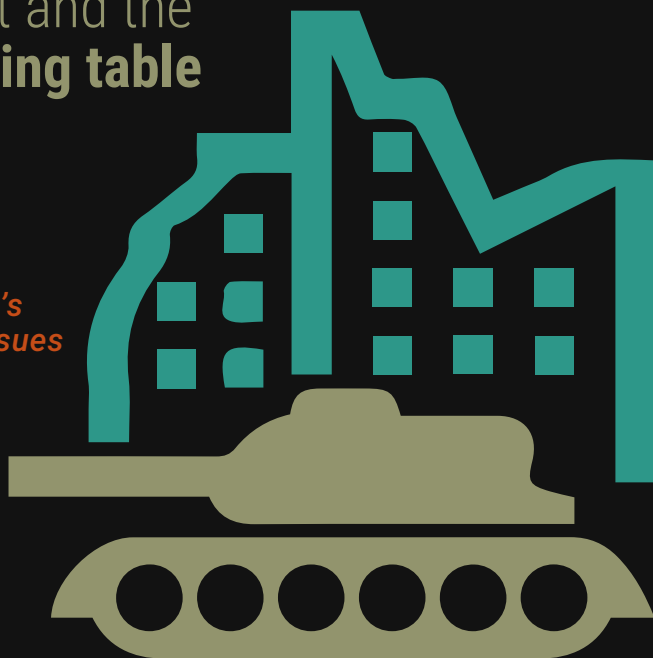
Get Syrian Government and the Opposition to **negotiating table**

WHY?



To end Syria's complicated issues

After the Russian military intervention, **Assad's position**, from a military point of view at least, has improved



NOW WHAT?

*The Vienna Conference could lead over time to a **ceasefire** between Assad and the non-IS rebels, but it is too soon to say that it will.*

What is painfully clear is that we all are going to witness more killing, more refugees, and more talking, Isn't it ?

HOW?

1

Crear inclusive administration




Design Constitution

2

3

Hold Elections





Enviro & Biodiver- sity

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summaries
of the most
relevant news
items from
Environment &
Biodiversity**

Enviro & Biodiversity

[b2b] What is carbon space?

- The IPCC, in its 5th Assessment Report, has published a carbon dioxide(CO₂) emission budget, which tells us **how much CO₂** can the world emit to stay below 2°C global warming.
- IPCC estimates that to remain below 2 °C the world can emit only about **2,900 Gt** of CO₂ from all sources from the dawn of industrial revolution till 2100.
- Till 2011, the world has already emitted 1,900 Gt of CO₂.
- This means that out of the budget of 2,900 Gt, only **1,000 Gt remains** to be used between now and 2100. It is also called as **Carbon budget**.

India to press for equity at climate talks despite pressure

- India has been engaging with **Small Island Developing States** and **Least Developed Countries** along with developed nations to evolve a consensus.
- **Two areas of failure** in the climate process are creation of the \$100-billion annual climate finance fund, and transfer of green technologies.
- The other contested area is that of **transparency norms** for use of funds.
- The overall approach of the rich countries is seen as **expanding the base of contributors**, while shrinking the base of recipients.
- India is also taking the lead in demanding the major share of the **carbon space** for the developing world.

Weather-related disasters becoming more frequent: UN report

- The Human Cost of Weather Related Disasters report, also found the 5 countries hit by the highest number of disasters were the **US, China, India, the Philippines and Indonesia**.
- Asia accounts for the “lion’s share of disaster impacts” including 332,000 deaths and 3.7 billion people affected.
- Flooding alone accounted for almost half of all weather related disasters between 1995 and 2015, affecting 2.3 billion people, out of which **95% live in Asia**.
- **Weather and climate** are major drivers of disaster risk.

[b2b] Let's have a jaunt to Famous lakes.

- **Sasthamkotta Lake**, the largest freshwater lake of Kerala, named after ancient **Sastha temple** (a pilgrimage centre) located on its bank.
- The purity of the lake water for drinking use is attributed to the presence of large population of larva called **cavaborus that consumes bacteria** in the lake water.
- **Vembanad Lake** holds rich fish diversity and has identified under National Wetlands Conservation Programme.
- Ashtamudi Estuary, a **large palm-shaped** waterbody which is fed by the Kallada River, a tropical brackish water habitat.
- Ashtamudi means '**eight coned**' in the local Malayalam language.

[b2b] Let's dive into Ramsar Sites Convention, 1971?

- Ramsar Convention (formally, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as **Waterfowl Habitat**).
- It is an **intergovernmental treaty** that provides framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- The Ramsar Convention has listed 2,122 **wetlands of international importance**.
- In India, there are **26 Ramsar sites**, covers 6.89 lakh hectare.

Genetic cataloguing of aquatic germplasm

- A project to prepare the **document** of the shell and fin fish varieties of the fish diversities of the **Ramsar sites** of Ashtamudi estuary, Sasthamkotta Lake and Vembanad-Kol Wetland in Kerala.
- The current project envisages generating **DNA barcodes** of the fish and shellfish species.
- It will serve as specific markers to facilitate accuracy in documenting the valuable fish resources of the study area.
- The study would help in developing species-specific **molecular signature** through DNA barcoding of the fish diversity.

[b2b] What is the Eco-Sensitive Zone?

- Purpose of declaring ESZ is to create a **buffer zone**, where activities will be regulated to protect areas demarcated as **Protected Areas (PAs)**.
- The width of ESZ go up to **10 kms around PAs**.
- To ensure that areas act as **“shock absorbers”** to protected areas by regulating and managing the activities.

State's stand will feature in the final notification on Kasturirangan Report

- Following **extensive survey and public consultation**, State government submitted report on the recommendations of the **Kasturirangan Committee**.
- It had considered as ESZ areas not only the wildlife areas but also **eco-sensitive zones in 40 taluks** of the State.
- As per directions of SC, the Forest Department has started the process of taking possession of forest land that has been encroached upon.
- At present, acquisition was in cases where encroachment has been **more than three acres**.
- In cases where encroachment was less than three acres, leaving it to the State government to decide.

[b2b] What is DELP scheme?

- Web-based system to enable consumers in Delhi to register requests for procuring LED bulbs under **Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP)**.
- LED bulb as a **Prakash Path**, a scheme for LED bulb distribution under the DELP scheme.
- It's the National Programme for LED-based Home and Street Lighting.

To Make India Brighter and Smarter Launches iLEDtheway

- Union Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal and New and Renewable Energy launched the **microsite www.iledtheway.in**.
- It is a great initiative, to take the pledge to **switch to LED bulbs**, to protect the environment and make country more energy efficient.

- Switching to LED bulbs will not only bring down **carbon footprint**, but ensure savings.
- Under the **DELP scheme**, EESL has distributed over 2.4 crore LED bulbs to consumers.

Delhi: Govt considers 'congestion tax' on vehicles

- The AAP government is contemplating levying a **“congestion tax”** on cars entering congested areas in the capital.
- This is part of its plan to **overhaul** Delhi's public transportation system.
- Creating **awareness** about use of public transport over personal vehicles is also a priority
- Govt.'s first priority is to make public transportation more **visible**, comfortable and readily available.
- The move will reduce traffic in **crowded parts** and control greenhouse gas emission levels.

NGT says no to age-old practice of straw burning

- Serious issue of **burning of agricultural waste** (straw) which contributes towards **global warming and the environmental pollution**.
- Straw Burning is age-old agricultural practice followed by farmers biannually by setting fire to fields to clear the land of residue of one harvest and sow the next.
- It carried in Northern western states to save time under the rice-wheat crop rotation and to make the land more fertile and kill pests.
- Open field burning emits Carbon Dioxide (**CO₂**), Carbon monoxide (**CO**) and Nitrous Oxide (**NO**) along with **particulate matter**.

[b2b] What is Global Warming?

- Global Warming is the increase of Earth's average surface temperature due to effect of **greenhouse gases(GHGs)**.
- For instance, Carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels or from deforestation, which trap heat that would otherwise escape from Earth.
- This is a type of **greenhouse effect**.
- Major GHGs are **CO₂**, **methane (CH₄)** and **nitrous oxide (N₂O)**.

Enviro & Biodiversity

Antarctica is gaining ice but it might reverse in few decades, warns NASA

- NASA says East Antarctica and West Antarctica are gaining ice but warns that it may reverse in few decades
- Areas of the continent like the **Antarctic peninsula** have increased their mass loss in the last decades.
- An increase in Antarctic snow accumulation that began 10,000 years ago is currently adding enough ice to the continent.
- Research challenges the conclusion of other studies, IPCC 2013 report, says that Antarctica is overall losing land ice.
- Good news is that Antarctica is not currently contributing to **sea level rise**, but is taking 0.23 mm per year away.

New Tariff Policy to Support Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

- Government will make it **compulsory for power plants** located within the radius of 100 kms of the city.
- To **use processed waste** water and release clean water for drinking purpose in the vicinity.
- New policy will make it compulsory for the local power distribution companies to buy electricity generated from the waste.
- These measures will give a push to Government's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA).

[op-ed snap] Animals caught in the headlights

- Policy is silent on a critical issue, that of highway stretches passing through forests, particularly, our sanctuaries and national parks.
- Speeding vehicles plying on these roads cause the deaths of thousands of animals, large and small, every year.
- A study in 2010 reported that **1,035 roadkills of wildlife** recorded in 430 days on a 9.2 km stretch of NH 7, passes through the Pench Tiger Reserve.
- Highway stretches passing through forests cause severe **fragmentation of habitats**.

More Indian birds enter list of threatened species

- **According to Red List of birds released by the IUCN for 2015**, total of **180 bird species** in India are now **threatened**.
- Includes **Northern Lapwing** (a grassland bird) and four wetland birds, namely **Red Knot, Curlew Sandpiper, Eurasian Oystercatcher** and **Bar-Tailed Godwit**.
- Two other wetland birds, Horned Grebe and Common Pochard have been uplisted from Least Concerned to **Vulnerable**.
- **Steppe Eagle**, which is a regular winter visitor to the Indian subcontinent, uplisted from Least Concerned to **Endangered**.

Oil Minister confirms BS-VI fuel rollout target of 2020

- India aims to implement introduction of the **cleaner Bharat Stage-VI fuel** in the country by 2020.
- The earlier plan was to implement BS-V by 2020 and **BS-VI by 2024**.
- The Petroleum Ministry is planning to **skip BS-V** and directly implement BS-VI standards by 2020.
- The technology in BS-VI engines is **substantially different** from that in BS-V engines making it unviable to skip the BS-V stage entirely.

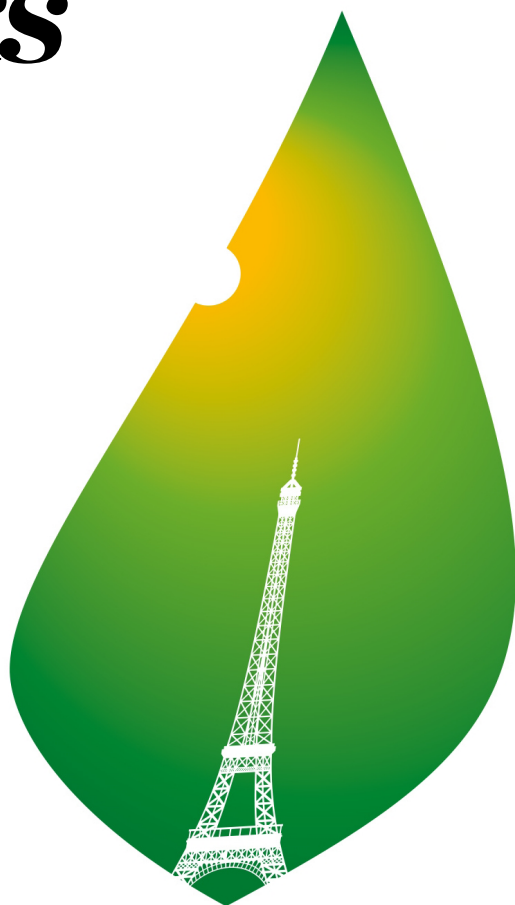
Dalai Lama to present Abdul Kalam Seva Ratna awards

- The awards were instituted by the Abdul Kalam Vision India Movement.
- To recognise outstanding contribution of individuals/organisations.
- To tree **plantation, de-addiction, reviving water bodies, providing safe drinking water** and **creating green campuses**.
- The movement decided to invite Dalai Lama as he and the former President Kalam shared the **same ideology of peace and prosperity**.

Don't cite national security to withhold info

- The CIC has told the BARC and the DRDO that they cannot withhold information in the guise of **national security**.
- The CIC's order have raised hope of residents and **environment activists** to stall military, defence and research institutes from coming up on the land.

Roadmap for Paris Climate Talks



COP21 • CMP11
PARIS 2015
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

What is the CoP-21 and it's origin?

The annual meeting is called CoP, or Conference of Parties, '**parties**' being a reference to the 196 signatories to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**), that came into force in 1994. The Paris meeting is the **21st meeting of the CoP**, and hence it is being called CoP-21.

Let's understand the objective of CoP-21

To deliver an agreement that will facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the only way to mitigate climate change.

What are the options to achieve this objective

Move to processes that do not release carbon dioxide, or **minimises** their emission. In terms of energy, sources like solar, wind or nuclear.

Make use of better technology to make industrial processes more **efficient**, and lower carbon emissions.

What is the quantum of emissions to be cut?

The purpose is to restrict the **global surface temperature** within 2-degree Celsius as compared to pre-industrial times.

The 2-degree target is a certain maximum amount of carbon dioxide that can be left accumulated in the atmosphere, often referred to as **carbon budget**. Scientists argue that at the current rate of greenhouse gas emissions, the budget would be **exhausted** in the next 25 years.

Why is it difficult to cut this quantum of emissions?

Almost every **human/industrial activity** involves the use of energy which is produced primarily by **burning fossil fuels**, such as coal, oil, etc; all of which have high carbon content.

Cutting emissions will mean slowing these activities and, thus, **economic development**.

**There is more
serious impact
on developed
countries**

The emission cuts for richer and developed countries would mean

- Altering their **lifestyles**
- Giving up big private vehicles to embrace **public transport**
- Reducing **consumption**. *This would have impact on countries whose economy is based on consumption.* ☞

Since more than **80% GHG emissions** present in the atmosphere today have been emitted by the **developed countries** which underwent Industrial Revolution in last 150 years.

Therefore, UN Framework Convention, 1994 placed the burden of mitigating **climate change** primarily on these countries.

What is the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)

This principle demands a bigger response from countries that were historically responsible for the problem, and which were also more capable of responding effectively.

Most of the rich and technologically advanced countries of the west fitted both criteria.

The Convention divided the world in two clear groups:

Annexure I countries: It was a group of 37 countries, who were required to take mandatory emission cuts.

Non-Annex countries: It comprises the rest of the world, who could take other measures to deal with climate change, like **adaptation**, but were not required to mandatorily reduce their emissions.

Where does the problem lie?

CBDR is at the heart of the Kyoto Protocol, the existing global arrangement for fighting climate change that came into being at CoP-3 in Kyoto, and gave **quantified emission cut targets** to every Annex-I country.

However, owing to persistent efforts of the rich and developed world, **CBDR has been steadily diluted**, and the **clear-cut bifurcation** of the world between Annex-I and non-Annex countries has slowly eroded.

What is the principle of Loss and Damage ?

It essentially tries to capture the **inability of communities/countries to cope** with the effects of global warming.

At the Conference of Parties (COP-19) of the UNFCCC, held in Warsaw in 2013, all parties agreed to set up a **new mechanism on L&D**.

Loss: It generally refers to the **complete forfeiture of items** like land, ecosystems, or of human lives. The term includes both economic and non-economic losses.

Damage: It refers to the **harm to infrastructure and property** that could be repaired.

What makes Loss and Damage important and different from other mechanism?

It is important because even after GHG emissions are **reduced and communities** adapt to climate change, there would still be **loss and damage to people, livelihoods and infrastructure** as a result of their inability to cope with climate change.

This is **distinct** from mitigation, or reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and adaptation, or finding ways to live in a warmer world.

How L&D will figure in Paris Climate Conference?

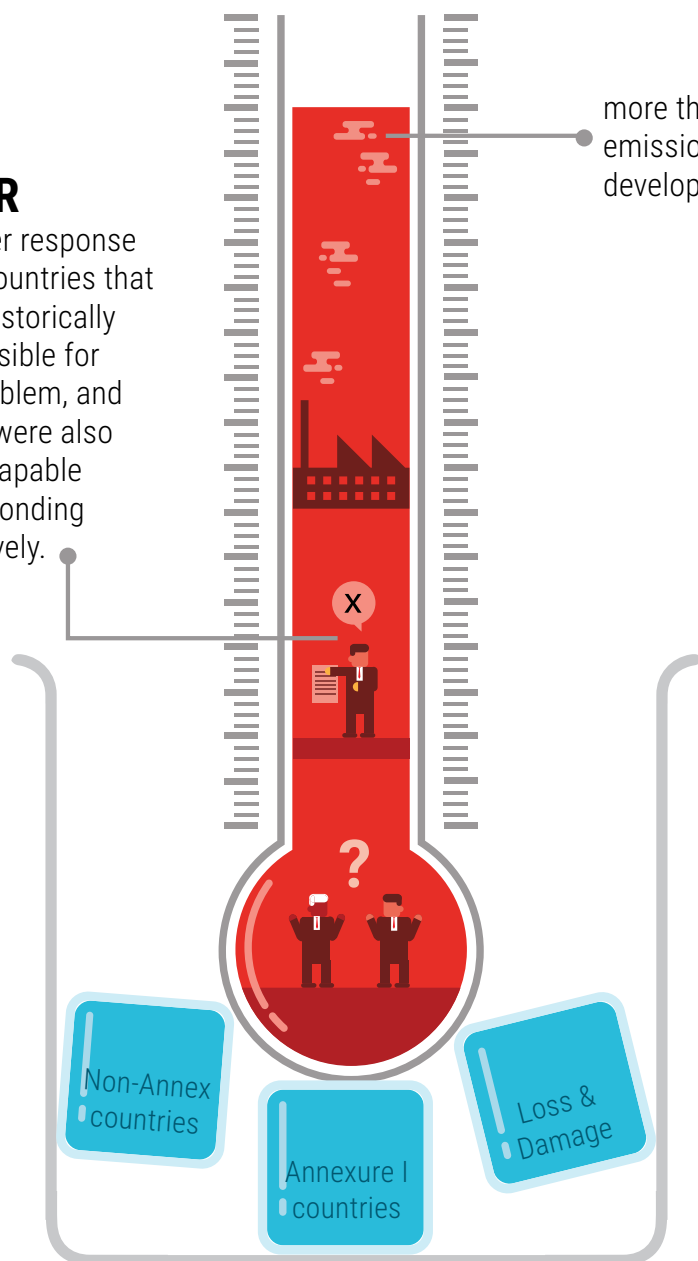
The **implementation** of L&D principle would mean that **Annex I countries would pay liability and compensation**, as they are responsible for bulk of emissions.

Recently, the **Like Minded Developing Countries** held a meeting in Delhi for the issues to be discussed in Paris COP and they have included Loss & Damage in their agenda. 

CBDR

a bigger response from countries that were historically responsible for the problem, and which were also more capable of responding effectively.

more than 80% emissions - by the developed countries



Annex 1 countries would pay liability & compensation
(D I S T I N C T F R O M M I T I G A T I O N)

CBDR has been steadily diluted, and the clear-cut bifurcation of the world between Annex-I and non-Annex countries has slowly eroded.

What is an INDC?

INDCs, known as **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions**.

INDCs are bottom-up commitments from nations defining the extent of their emissions reduction contribution towards this global goal.

INDCs showcase a **paradigm shift** from top-down approach to **bottom-up system**, in deciding the commitments towards climate change.

Countries have agreed to publicly outline what **post-2020 climate actions** they intend to take under a new international agreement, known as their INDCs.

Why are INDCs important for climate change?

These INDCs will form the basis for the most awaited Paris Climate Change agreement by the end of this year, which will put in place a **new protocol** from 2020.

It will largely determine whether the world achieves an **ambitious 2015 agreement** and is put on a path toward a **low-carbon, climate-resilient future**.

Ambitious, equitable and transparent INDCs can provide the world a fighting chance to tackle climate change.

How does the process work?

The process for INDCs pairs national policy-setting in which countries determine their contributions in the context of their **national priorities**, circumstances and capabilities.

It will be accompanied with a global framework where each country drives the **collective action** towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

INDCs are the primary means for govts to **communicate internationally** the steps they will take to address climate change in their own countries.

What do India's INDC look like?

Indian INDCs are inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote, "**Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed.**"


- India has promised to **reduce the emissions intensity** of its GDP by 33-35% by 2030 from 2005 levels. < The GHG emission intensity means the ratio between a country's gross emissions to its gross domestic product at a particular point. >
- To **increase** the share of non-fossil fuel sources in its energy portfolio to about 40% by 2030.
- To create an additional **carbon sink** of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

These emission intensity-reduction targets and adaptation to climate change will require about \$2.5 trillion

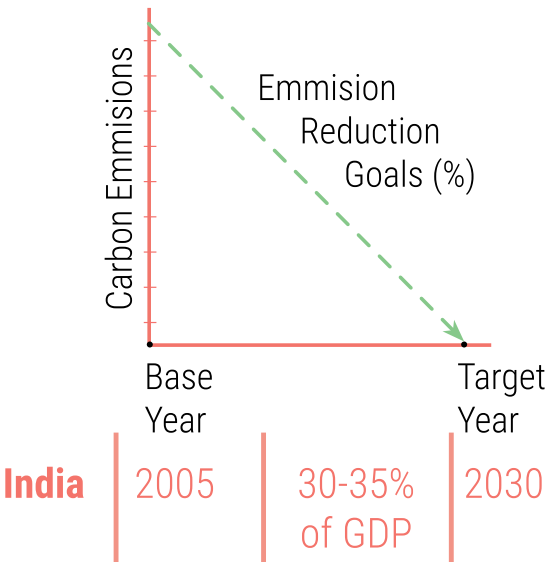
How will India mobilise funds to fulfill its INDC commitment?

INDC data estimates spending of at least **\$2.5 trillion** between 2015-30 to meet its ambitious INDC target.

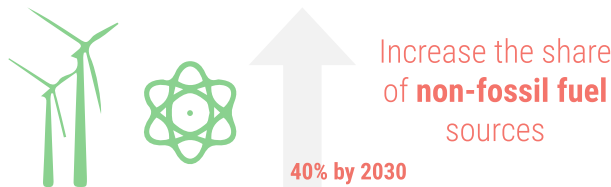
India is banking on fiscal measures including **fuel subsidy cuts** and increased taxes on fossil fuels including diesel and petrol.

The coal cess forms the corpus for the **National Clean Environment Fund**, which is used for financing clean energy, technologies, and projects related to it. 

INDCs for Each Country



HOW?



Create a **carbon sink** of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest



banking on fiscal measures including **fuel subsidy cuts** and increased **taxes on fossil fuels** including diesel and petrol

*INDC data estimates spending of atleast **\$2.5 trillion** between 2015-30 to meets its ambitious INDC target*



Science & Tech

**28 newscards | Hand curated
summaries
of the most
relevant news
items from
Science &
Technology**

[b2b] What is Hyperspectral Imaging?

- Hyperspectral images provide **ample spectral information** to identify and distinguish spectrally unique materials.
- This technology provides **deeper insights** into the type of material present, and finds its use in remote sensing technology.
- Hyperspectral images will have **many applications** in resource mgmt, agriculture, mineral exploration, and environmental monitoring.
- **Spectroscopy** is the study of light that is emitted by or reflected from materials and its variation in energy with wavelength.

ISRO working on 4-D, 5-D imaging technology: scientist

- ISRO is working on 4-D and 5-D imaging technology as part of the space agency's engagement with **hyperspectral imaging**.
- Hyperspectral imaging is a new and emerging area in **Geographic Information System (GIS)**.
- It will enable researchers, doctors and students to use the most advanced GIS tool for **welfare activities**.

World's deadliest superbugs

- Chinese researchers discovered a new superbug gene called **mcr-1**.
- That enables bacteria to be highly **resistant to polymyxins**, the last line of antibiotic defence the world has left.
- The researchers found strains with **epidemic potential**.
- The polymyxins were last class of antibiotics in which resistance was incapable of spreading from cell to cell.

[b2b] Let's have a look to NRDC?

- Presently working under administrative control of the Dept. of Scientific and Industrial Research, **Ministry of Science and Technology**.
- It is now recognised as a large repository of wide range of technologies spread over all areas of industries.

- It has licensed **indigenous technology** to more than 4800 entrepreneurs and helped to establish a large number of small and medium scale industries.

Pan India Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Awareness Programmes

- The objective of this IPRs campaign is to create **awareness** about IP in academia in wake of new IPR policy launched by Gol.
- Connecting IPRs to **Make in India** and Start up India programs.
- It will provide insight into different forms of IPRs, innovation ecosystem, procedural requirements for protection and about challenges faced by stakeholders.
- Providing facilitation and techno-financial support for filing patent application in India is one of important promotional activities of NRDC.

India's first solar mission, Aditya-1

- ISRO chairman said, India's first solar mission, Aditya-1, is slated for lift-off in **2018-2019**.
- Spacecraft will be positioned 1.5 million kms from the earth at a point called **Lagrangian-1** and will make a detailed study of sun 24x7.
- Data from Aditya mission will be immensely helpful in discriminating between different models for the **origin of solar storms**.
- Helpful in constraining how the storms evolve and what path they take through the interplanetary space from the Sun to the Earth.

[b2b] What is biopsy?

- A biopsy is a **medical test** commonly performed by a surgeon, or cardiologist involving sampling of cells or tissues for examination.
- It is the medical removal of tissue from a living subject to **determine the presence or extent of a disease**.

Blood-based biopsy to improve cancer detection

- Using this new method for blood-based RNA tests of blood platelets, researchers able to identify cancer with **96% accuracy**.
- It proves that **blood-based biopsies** have an immense potential to improve early detection of cancer.
- **Blood platelets** could constitute a complete and easily accessible blood-based source for sampling.
- Hence, it used in **diagnosing cancer** and in the choice of **treatment method**.

NISAR biggest outcome of ISRO-NASA partnership: NASA scientist

- ISRO will be providing the **S-band SAR** payload and the launch vehicle, while NASA will be providing the **L-band SAR** and the engineering payload.
- NASA and ISRO will be collaborating to make **IRNSS and GPS** more accurate.
- NASA will also be providing **navigation and trajectory support** to Chandrayaan-2.
- Both agencies are going to conduct an **airborne experiment** with NASA instrument Airborne Visible InfraRed Imaging Spectrometer – Next Genera

[b2b] What is NISAR?

- It stands for NASA-ISRO **Synthetic Aperture Radar** .
- It will also keep a close eye for ecosystem disturbances, ice-sheet collapses and natural hazards.

[b2b] What is IRNSS?

- Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System is an **independent regional** navigation satellite system being developed by India.
- It will cover India, and also **extend 1,500 kms** from its boundaries, while GPS developed by other countries have global coverage.
- IRNSS will provide two types of services, viz. **Standard Positioning Service** to all the users and **Restricted Service**.

- The latter is an encrypted service, available only to the **authorised users** , such as defence.
- It is expected to provide a **position accuracy** of better than 20 m in the primary service area.

New light on human blood formation

- A team of Canadian scientists has discovered a completely new view of how human blood is made.
- They found how different kinds of blood cells form quickly from the stem cell, the most potent blood cell in the system.
- At this point, you must be thinking that oh wow but am I gonna be asked this in the exam?
- Most likely not! But this might be a good point to revise on the basics of stem cells.

Strong solar winds may have stripped life on Mars: NASA

- NASA's Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (**MAVEN**) is **first mission** devoted to understanding how sun influenced to atmospheric changes on **Red Planet**.
- Solar wind might played key role in turning the Martian climate from an early, warm and wet to the cold, arid planet today.
- The solar wind is a stream of particles, **mainly protons and electrons**, flowing from the sun's atmosphere at a speed of about **one million miles per hour**.
- Magnetic field carried by the solar wind as it flows past Mars can generate an electric field, much as a turbine on Earth can be used to **generate electricity**.

[b2b] What is 3D printing ?

- 3D printing is a process of making three dimensional **solid objects from a digital file** with extreme precision.
- Also termed **additive manufacturing** as the 3D printed object is created as additive layers.
- 3D Printing has limitless possibilities and can create almost anything with just raw material and computer generated model.

Scientists developed 3-D printing method to produce embryonic stem cells.

- Scientists from China and US have developed a 3-D printing method to produce highly uniform 'blocks' of **embryonic stem cells**.
- This 3D printed embryoid body demonstrated cell viability and rapid self-renewal for 7 days by maintaining high pluripotency.
- Cells are capable of generating all cell types could be used as the '**Lego bricks**' to build larger structures of tissues, tissue constructs and even micro-organs.
- Technique can be enhanced for providing the basic building blocks for **tissue regeneration** and for **drug screening studies**.

Agni-IV to be tested next week

- Agni-IV is India's **surface-to-surface** missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads.
- Agni-IV is a **two-stage missile** and 20 metres long and weighs 17 tonnes.
- The missile can cover 4,000 km.-

[b2b] Do you know Ku band ?

- The Ku band is **12–18 GHz** portion of the electromagnetic spectrum in the **microwave range** of frequencies.
- Ku band is primarily used for **satellite communications**, most notably for fixed and broadcast services.
- For instance, NASA's Tracking Data Relay Satellite used for both space shuttle and International Space Station (ISS) communications.

[b2b] What is the Communications satellite ?

- Communications satellite is an artificial satellite, relays and amplifies through use of a transponder, radio telecommunications signals, between a source and a receiver.
- Communications satellites are used for **television, telephone, radio, internet, and military applications**.
- Communications satellites orbit the Earth in Geosynchronous orbit (**GEO**), Medium Earth orbit (**MEO**), Low Earth orbit (**LEO**).

GSAT-15 set to replace dying INSAT-3A and 4B

- GSAT-15, communications satellite, will replace two older spacecraft that will likely expire in the coming months.
- Its 24 transponders are solely in the **Ku band** and will cater to **DTH** (direct-to-home) television first.
- GSAT-15 will not add new transponder capacity to the country.
- It will ensure sustainability of service for the **capacity-hungry DTH sector**. It will carry the **third GAGAN satellite** navigation transponder as a back-up for airlines and other users of augmented GPS-based systems.

[b2b] What the heck is NASA for?

- NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
- NASA was formed in 1958 to challenge the Soviet juggernaut post their launch of the world's first artificial satellite (**Sputnik 1**).
- **The president** of US being? Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Indian scientists seek to prove genetic basis of Ayurvedic Prakriti

- Researchers conducted a genomewide **Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP)**, analysis on 262 men.
- Vata, Pitta and Kapha are based on physical, psychological, physiological and behavioural traits.
- In Ayurveda, a person's treatment is based on her Prakriti.
- A gene called **PGM1** correlates with the **phenotype of Pitta**, as is described in the ancient Ayurvedic text of **Charak Samhita**.

GSAT-15 to be launched on Nov 10 from French Guiana

- ISRO's latest **communication satellite GSAT-15** launched from French Guiana on board Ariane 5.
- As part of augmenting telecommunication services, had earlier launched communication satellites GSAT-14 and GSAT-6.
- It will have a lift off mass of **3,164.5 kg** and will have mission life of **12 years**.

- GSAT-15 launched along with **Arabsat6B**, set up by the Arab League Intergovernmental Organisation.
- Arabsat to provide telecommunications and television broadcast services for Middle East and African region.

China's first lunar rover Yutu sets longest stay on Moon

- For almost **two years** it has surpassed previous record of Soviet Union's 1970 launched **rover Lunokhod 1**.
- The lunar rover Yutu was deployed and landed on the moon in 2013 via **China's Chang'e-3 lunar probe**.
- Presently it is capable to collect data, send and receive signals and record images and video but unable to move due to mechanical abnormality.

Google's internet balloons to circle Earth

- Tie-ups with three major Indonesian telecom operators to expand web connectivity in the country's remote areas using hundreds of **net-beaming balloons**.
- **Project Loon by Google X**, Alphabet's research division, which works on ambitious ideas, including self-driven cars.
- In Project Loon, each balloon provides connectivity to ground area of **40 km** in diameter, using **LTE wireless communications technology**.

Surprising discovery of oxygen in 67P comet's atmosphere

- **Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko** has thrown a very big surprise, its atmosphere contains **molecular oxygen**.
- Molecular oxygen is highly reactive, it was assumed that it would have combined with hydrogen then present to form water.
- The oxygen originated very early, before the formation of the Solar System.

Tesla's technology reinvented

- Flyte Levitating Light combines **Tesla's technology with magnetic levitation** to offer **wireless power via induction**.
- The result was a completely new way of looking at light that came forth in the form of Flyte Levitating Light.
- Flyte has been designed in Sweden and does not need any batteries. It powers light in the air via induction.
- The base is made out of sustainably-sourced oak, ash, or walnut, and the light bulb uses LEDs that are energy efficient and are rated at 50,000 hours.
- This means that the levitating light will keep your desk or study illuminated for 12 hours each day for 11 years.

NASA completes key milestone for most powerful rocket

- The first vehicle designed to meet the challenges of the **journey to Mars**, has completed all steps needed to **clear a critical design review (CDR)**.
- This is the first time in almost 40 years that a NASA human-rated rocket has cleared a CDR.
- Review gives confidence that they are on the right track for the first flight of SLS and using it to extend **permanent human presence into deep space**.
- Critical design reviews for the individual SLS elements of the core stage, boosters and engines were completed successfully as part of this milestone.

New technique to detect magnetic fields inside stars

- The researchers used **asteroseismology**, a discipline similar to seismology, to track waves traveling through stars in order to determine their inner properties.
- The technique is analogous to a medical ultrasound, which uses sound waves to image otherwise invisible parts of the human body.
- The study analysed data from the **Kepler satellite**, a space telescope that measures stellar brightness variations with very high precision.
- When **strong magnetic fields** present in a star's core, fields can disrupt the propagation of gravity waves, causing some of the waves to lose energy and become trapped within the core.
- The researchers coined the term **"magnetic greenhouse effect"** to describe this phenomenon.

Google's Project Loon

Balloon powered Internet

What is Google's project loon ?

Many of us think of the Internet as a global community. But two-thirds of the world's population does not yet have Internet access.

Balloon powered Internet: Project Loon is a **network of balloons traveling on the edge of space, designed to connect people in rural and remote areas**, help fill coverage gaps, and bring people back online after disasters.

- Each balloon's electronics are powered by an array of solar panels.
- The panels produce approximately 100 Watts of power in full sun, which is enough to keep Loon's electronics running.
- Project Loon is able to power itself using entirely renewable energy sources.

Then, How does it exactly work?

- Project Loon balloons travel approximately 20 km above the Earth's surface in the stratosphere.
- Winds in the stratosphere are stratified, and each layer of wind varies in speed and direction.
- Project Loon uses software algorithms to determine where its balloons need to go, then moves each one into a layer of wind blowing in the right direction.
- By moving with the wind, the balloons can be arranged to form one large communications network.

How is the Loon designed ?

- The inflatable part of the balloon is called a balloon envelope.

How does it connect?

- Each balloon can provide connectivity to a ground area about 40 km in diameter using a wireless communications technology called Long-Term Evolution (LTE).
- With this LTE, people will be able to access the Internet everywhere directly from their phones and other LTE-enabled devices.
- Balloons relay wireless traffic from cell phones and other devices back to the global Internet using high-speed links.


Very quickly then, what has Loon been up to all this while?

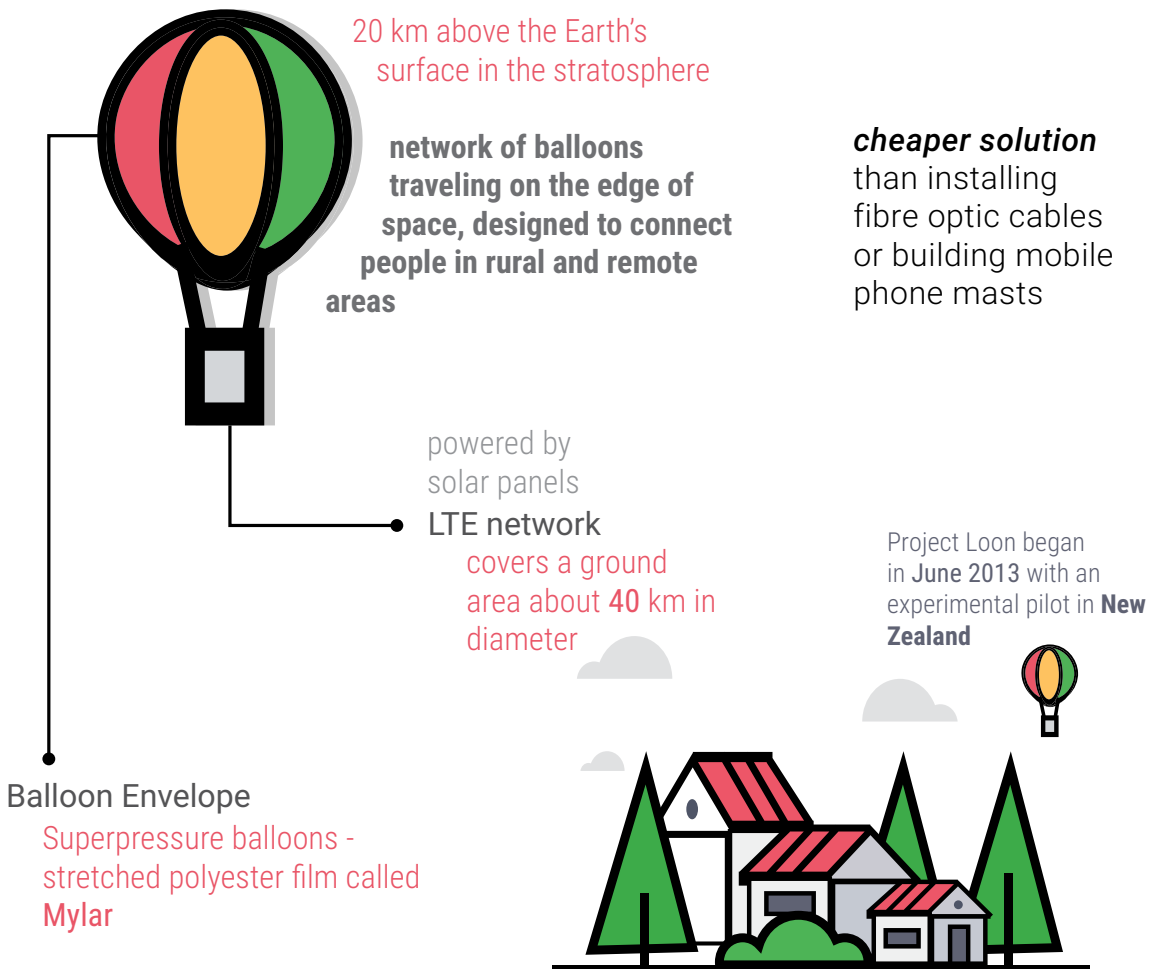
- Project Loon began in June 2013 with an experimental pilot in New Zealand.
- The results of the pilot test as well as subsequent tests in New Zealand, California's Central Valley and in Northeast Brazil were analysed.
- They were used to improve the technology in preparation for the next stages of the project.

What are Superpressure balloons?


- Superpressure balloons are made out of tightly sealed plastic capable of containing highly pressurised lighter-than-air gases.
- The concept was first developed for the US Air Force in the 1950s using a stretched polyester film called Mylar.
- More recently, NASA has experimented with the technology and suggested superpressure balloons could one day be deployed into Mars's atmosphere.

What's the way forward for Google balloons?

- Google suggests that Project Loon would be a cheaper solution than installing fibre optic cables or building mobile phone masts across all of Indonesia's islands, which contain jungles and mountains.
- Google is in talks with the Indian government to deploy this wind power project here. The company hopes to begin production by 2016. 



History



**09 newscards | Hand curated
summaries
of the most
relevant news
items from
History**

History

[b2b] Do you know 'Indology' terminology ?

- Indology is the academic study of the **history and cultures, languages, and literature** of the Indian subcontinent, and is a subset of Asian studies.
- Indology includes study of **Sanskrit literature and Hinduism**.
- Along with the other Indian religions, Jainism, Buddhism and Pali literature, and Sikhism.
- Same as **Dravidology**, as the separate branch dedicated to the Dravidian languages of South India.

[b2b] Do Know about Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) ?

- It involved in India's external cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples.
- **Autonomous** organisation founded on 9 April **1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, the first Education Minister of independent India.
- To actively participate in formulation and implementation of programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations.
- To foster and strengthen **cultural relations** and mutual understanding between India and other countries.

President to inaugurate first ever World Indology Conference

- A 3-day World Indology Conference organised in collaboration with **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)**.
- Around 21 eminent Indologists from world and 8 senior scholars from India deliberate on **Indian culture and philosophy**.
- Discussions on topics such as 'Indological Studies in Historical Perspective', 'Sanskrit Literature', 'Indian Art and Architecture' and so on.
- Scholars participating in it are those who have devoted their life-time to the interpretation and reinterpretation of Indian knowledge system.

Govt forms panel for studying Saraswati river

- The committee will draw up a comprehensive programme for the study of the Saraswati basin and **identify 16 sites for R&D**.
- It will also advise the central govt. on issues such as defining the river basin, **identifying archaeological sites**, areas for multidisciplinary research.
- It will also assess their potential for development as centres of education and tourism.
- The panel will also identify proper agencies for carrying out **field research** in the identified zones.

International Terra Madre begins in Shillong

- Theme is **The Future We Want: Indigenous Perspectives and Actions**.
- Organised as collaboration between Slow Food, North East Slow Food and Agro biodiversity Society and Indigenous Partnership for Agro biodiversity and Food Sovereignty.
- The 5-day international fiesta will celebrate the biological and cultural diversity of indigenous communities.

11th National Tribal Crafts Mela 'Aadishilp'

- Crafts Mela has been organised by Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (**TRIFED**).
- Objective of **Aadishilp** is provide tribal artisans a **platform to showcase their talents** through their valuable products to urban India.
- Mela will showcase hand crafted items, handloom products, bamboo products, dry flowers, tribal jewellery, Dhokra craft, tribal paintings etc.

Indology meet to project 'soft power'

- Ministry of External Affairs is ready to promote the global discipline of Indology as a **soft diplomatic platform**.
- Ministry, under the umbrella of the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations**, organise **first World Indology Conference**.
- Spirit of universality found in the Upanishads are particularly relevant to the violent 21st century.
- Indology, includes the study of the Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishads and the Sanskrit classics.

Ancient temples in Mandya district unearthed

- Believed to be the oldest known archaeological find belonging to the **Western Ganga dynasty**.
- Important ruling dynasty of **ancient Karnataka** , dynasty lasted from about 350 to 1000 AD.
- Most famous for their **patronage toward Jainism** resulting in the construction of monuments in places such as **Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli**.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards for 2014

- **The President of India** , recently conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for the year 2014.
- The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India's national academy for **music, dance and drama**.
- **First National Academy** of the arts set-up by the Republic of India, created by a resolution of Government of India in **1952**.

The First Firangis

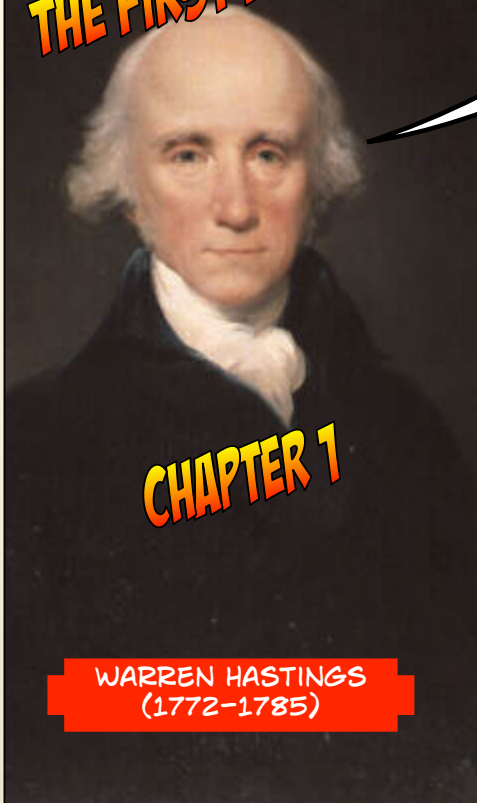
A lot had happened before Warren Hastings arrived at the scene in India (or shall we say, Fort William in Bengal). He was not the first governor under the company's rule (that was Robert Clive) but he was one of the most imposing figures in our entire pre-independence history after East India Company started expanding in size.

Quick trivia: EIC used to have agents till before. Think of EIC as a private company in Britain along with many many other companies. These guys would show up in a Mughal court and with all the diplomatic wisdom intact and ask for tiny-miny concessions, financial discounts etc etc. all in the good faith of trade and commerce! One such guy, Job Charnock in 1690, purchased the city of Kalikatta which then became Calcutta (english swag!) and he fortified it with Fort William.

Warren Hastings And His Time as Governor General of India

LIFE AND TIMES OF THE
VICEROYS IN INDIA

THE FIRST FIRANGIS



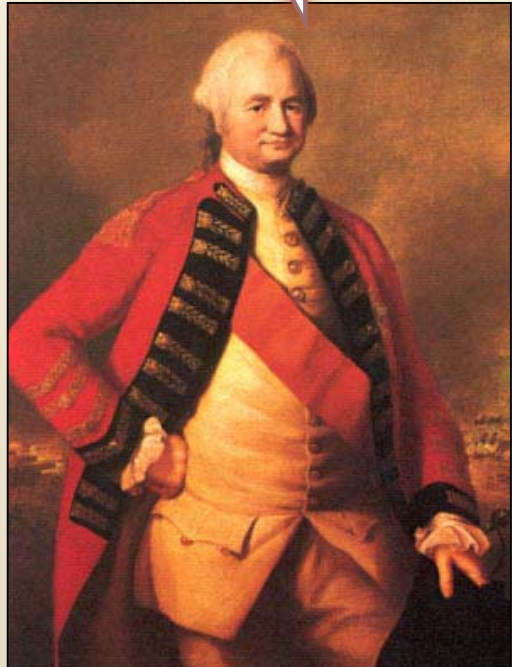
CHAPTER 1

WARREN HASTINGS
(1772-1785)

I INHERITED THE GOVERNORSHIP
OF FORT WILLIAM AT A TIME OF
GREAT UNCERTAINTIES.

AND YOU KNOW WHO WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RUCKUS?

THAT WOULD BE ME ;)
ROBERT CLIVE - THE FIRST
GOVERNOR OF FORT
WILLIAM.



INDIAN IN 1772 WAS IN A BAD, BAD
SHAPE:

1. DUAL SYSTEM OF
ADMINISTRATION BY ROBERT CLIVE
WAS A FAILURE
2. THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN BENGAL
WAS IN SHAMBLES
3. 1770 WITNESSED A DISASTROUS
FAMINE IN BENGAL!

THE FINANCES OF THE [EIC] WERE
IN GREAT DISTRESS!

QUICK NOTE:

AFTER THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY
IN 1757 AND THE BATTLE OF
BUXAR IN 1764, THE EAST INDIA
COMPANY BECAME A POLITICAL
POWER IN INDIA.

Okay, so what did Warren Hastings walk into?

Well, the Battle of Plassey (1757) & Buxar (1764) had already sealed the fate of Indians – gone into the hands of the East India Company's rule till about 1858 when British Crown said, "It's time to hand this country over to us guys! You have botched it up enough."

But there was another mess up which had happened somewhere around 1773, when because of Company's inept revenue management (Robert clive is to be blamed for that) & the infamous Bengal famine, they went into losses and was on a brink of bankruptcy!

And this is where the first major constitutional change came in the company's history and Warren Hastings was made the first governor general of Fort William after this major act was introduced.

The Regulating Act of 1773

The British parliament bailed the fledgling company out of debt but instituted a 'regulation of sorts' so that such inept revenue, justice and administrative mismanagement is not repeated again!

The Gov of Bengal was made Gov General of Bengal. He was assisted by 4 people. This 4+1 becomes the executive council (later called the govt of India).

Now, this executive council in later acts will be supported by a legislative council. And these will grow big in course of time and form present days Parliament and Council of Ministers. After all we inherited a lot of stuff from these firangis only, right!

Was Warren Hastings any good?

He was a badass in the sense that he fought many wars & had very elevated imperialistic tendencies. He looked like a guy in full sway of the white man's burden. You know that term right?

But he did a lot of good in terms of administrative policies and was a stickler for justice.

He removed nawabs and zamindars from the corrupt & prejudiced judicial decision making.

Every district now had a civil court under the Collector and a criminal court under an Indian judge. He also instituted higher courts and a Supreme court was set up in Calcutta (via the Regulating Act 1773).

He also abolished the system of dastaks, or free passes and regulated the internal trade. He enforced uniform tariffs and instituted a uniform system of pre-postage stamps.

You know, you will be able to appreciate some of these systems which evolved since the time and are carried in the present day India. Of course there were more additions and subtractions over time and we who has what part to play in later stages!

In comes the Pitt's Act of 1784 and here's where things change a bit

We see the British Govt further tightening their grip on company matters. They establish the Board Of Control (BOC). **The BOC had 6 members including the Secretary Of State (Morley of Morley Minto, etc).**

We don't want to sweep you with the technicalities but what essentially happens now is that British government adds one more layer between the company's director and itself. 🇮🇳

THIS IS WHERE THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT SAID -
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! WE NEED REGULATION NOW!

THE REGULATING ACT OF 1773

THE GREATEST MERIT OF THIS ACT WAS
THAT IT PUT AN END TO THE ARBITRARY
RULE OF THE COMPANY AND PROVIDED A
FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNANCE.

ONE MAJOR DEFECT OF THE ACT?

GOVERNOR GENERAL WAS NOT MADE ALL
POWERFUL AND HE COULD NOT VETO ~~ET~~
STUFF (~LESS EFFECTIVE).

WHERE
GOING
HASTINGS?

WARS
BABY,
WARS!

NO WORRIES!
PITT'S ACT OF 1784 WILL
CORRECT THIS ISSUE



BACK TO HASTINGS!
GOVERNANCE NOW...

WE KNOW HE HAD
AN AFFINITY
TOWARDS
EXPANSION.

HE WAS EVEN
IMPEACHED LATER
IN ENGLAND FOR
HIS ADMINISTRATIVE
EXCESS!

HE FOUGHT
MARATHAS

1ST WAR
(1775-82)

HE EVEN FOUGHT
WITH MYSORE

(HAIDER ALI'S TIME)
1780-84

OH, AND DID WE
FORGET THE
ROHILLA WAR OF
1774!

FAIR ENOUGH.
HE WAS A GREAT
EXPANSIONIST.
WHAT ELSE?

1. JUDICIAL REFORMS
2. TRADE REGULATIONS
3. REVENUE REFORMS

THAT'S ALL!
REST HE WAS

**A
BADASS**

If Sunny Deol's "Tareekh pe tareekh pe tareekh" dialogue were to be revisited (with amendments), now would a good time.

Here's what had happened till date:

East India Company (EIC) unlike any other private company of the Great Britain struck gold in India! It was making a lot of money and understandably giving a share back to the crown, but it was sovereign in terms of political and commercial dealings with Indian kings and trade.

We saw in the last part that they ran out of luck in 1773 and were rescued by the the crown in lieu of some mandatory regulation/ supervising.

But but but, as luck would had it, there were a lot of excesses done by the Company and the supervisory role proved to be inept!

This is when Pitt proposed that there should be a new act whereby the crown will "superintend, direct and control" the government of the Company's possessions in India.

Masterstroke! In fact, the constitution set up by Pitt's India Act did not undergo any major changes until the end of the company's rule in India in 1858.

The Pitt's India Act 1784 actually **provided for a joint government of the company and British crown in India.**

And how did Pitt's India Act go about it?

1. In political matters, the company which was till now working as somewhat sovereign was made directly subordinate to the British government.
2. To make this possible, Board of Control was created with 6 people, including a position called as Secretary of State which grew stronger and stronger with time.
3. The Company was to be represented by the Court of Directors and the Crown was represented by the Board of Control.

Of course, as you would have guessed the powers of the company were clipped, Calcutta was made more powerful and Bombay and Madras (which were the other two major hubs of EIC were made subordinate to it).

Love to know some more technicalities of the Pitt's India Act?

1. The Governor General Council was now under indirect control of the British Government through the Board of Control.
2. There was also a secret committee of the 3 directors, which had to transmit the orders of the Board to India.
3. This Secret Committee was to work as a link between the Board of control and the Court of Directors.

But cool as this dual governance may have sounded, the Pitt's Act did not last very long!

Can you tell us the reasons why? 

Hey Pitt, What's Your Act?

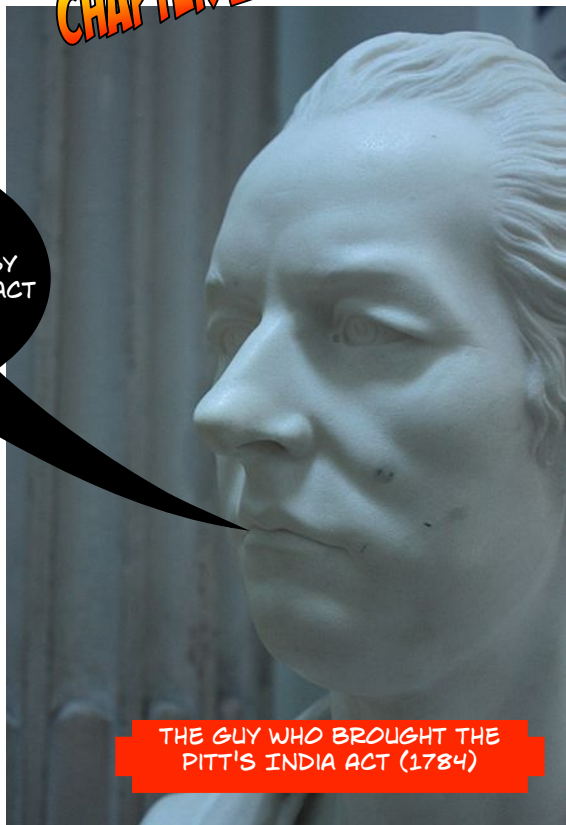
LIFE AND TIMES OF THE
VICEROYS IN INDIA

THE FIRST FIRANGIS

CHAPTER 2

I, WILLIAM PITT, THE
YOUNGER, SHALL HEREBY
AMEND THE REGULATION ACT
OF 1773

WE NEED TO DO SOME
AMENDMENTS, MAN.
THE COMPANY IS HAVING IT
TOO EASY!



THE GUY WHO BROUGHT THE
PITT'S INDIA ACT (1784)

AMENDMENTS PE
AMENDMENTS PE
AMENDMENTS.....



WHAT'S WRONG WITH
THE 1773 ACT?

DON'T YOU ALREADY
SUPERVISE COMPANY'S
WORK IN INDIA?

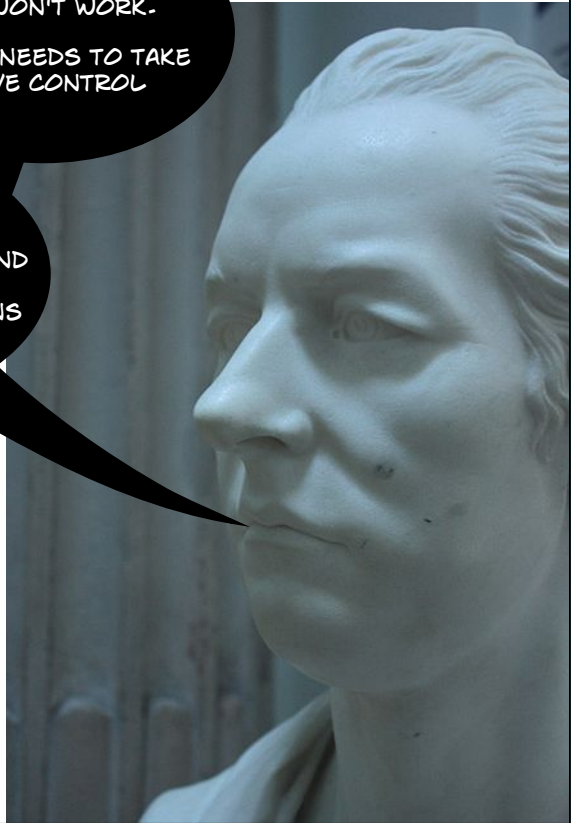
1773'S ACT WAS A FAILURE
IN SOME WAYS...

ONLY SUPERVISION OF
EIC WON'T WORK.

BRITAIN NEEDS TO TAKE
ACTIVE CONTROL

KEY WORDS ARE:
"SUPERINTEND, DIRECT AND
CONTROL" OF THE
COMPANY'S POSSESSIONS

EAST INDIA COMPANY'S
POLITICAL FUNCTIONS ARE
TO BE DIFFERENTIATED FROM
ITS COMMERCIAL
ACTIVITIES.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN
PITT SAHEB?



BECAUSE OF EXCESSES OF WARREN
HASTINGS (IN TERMS OF HIS
EXPANSIONIST POLICIES), COMPANY
LOOSES THE FREE HAND IN ITS
POLITICAL DEALINGS WITHIN INDIA.

A BOARD OF CONTROL WILL BE
CREATED AND THIS WILL
REPRESENT THE BRITISH CROWN.

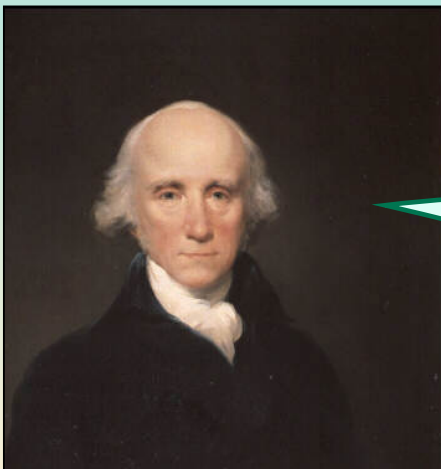
THE COMPANY WOULD DIRECTLY
ANSWER TO THIS BOARD OF
CONTROL

SO NOW,

THE FATE OF INDIA PEOPLE WOULD BE
DECIDED BY THE COMPANY AND THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT??

WON'T THAT BRING SOME SORT OF
CONFUSION?

... AND SUNNY DEOL WAS PROVEN RIGHT IN TIME. THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN
BOARD OF CONTROL & COURT OF DIRECTORS WERE VERY CONFUSING! THE ACT
FAILED EVENTUALLY BUT NOT WITHOUT LEAVING ITS IMPRINTS FOR TIME TO COME!



REMEMBER ME?

WARREN HASTINGS, YOUR FIRST
GOV GENERAL...

THESE GUYS HAD ME IMPEACHED
FOR MY EXCESSES AND BLAMED
ME FOR MISHANDLING THE
POLITICAL SITUATION IN INDIA.

Lord Cornwallis

& His Permanent Settlement

This British soldier and statesman was probably best known for his defeat at Yorktown, Virginia, in the last important campaign (September 28–October 19, 1781) of the American Revolution.



A blue-blooded aristocrat, he discharged his duties fearlessly, and naturally was a stickler of justice and doing things right.

And yet he was appointed the Governor General of India? FTW!

Yea well, perks of coming from an influential & aristocratic family! He was a close friend of Prime Minister Pitt and of Dundas, the most influential member of the Board of Control. *Remember these two guys from the earlier comic?*

Anyhow, so Cornwallis stays in India as Gov General from 1786-1793 and his stint was quite remarkable.



His greatest work was the purification of the civil service by the employment of capable and honest public servants.

He persuaded the Directors of the Company to pay handsome salaries to the Company servants in order that they might free themselves from commercial and corrupting activities

Quite cool, right? For someone to have such foresight, am sure you guys would have wanted his ghost to preside over the 7th pay commission!



Here's a brief history of revenue collection till Cornwallis arrived at the scene

1. Clive, the founder of the British Empire, could not give to Bengal a good land system. The land revenue was collected from peasants through oppressive agents.
2. Warren Hastings established a Board of Revenue, appointed European District Collectors but still there were so many villages and so few officers to just go and collect revenue.
3. Hastings tried to experiment with a bidding system wherein one big player agrees to take care of revenues for ~5 years and then it's his headache to collect it from the peasants. As you would understand, this led to oppression and extortion of the farmers. **Bad move!**

Here's where Lord Cornwallis steps into the scene and gives the gyaan on 'Permanent Settlement'

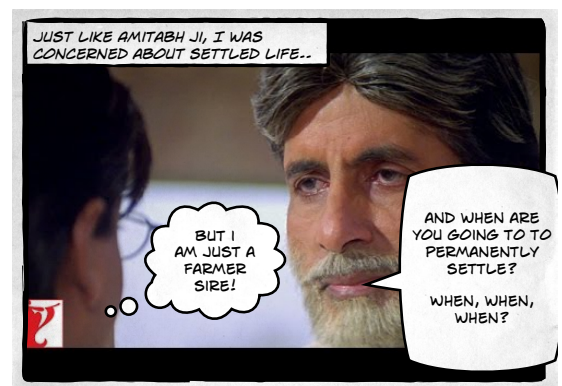
Cornwallis came from a family of landlords in England. In those days, the British landlords were regarded as the permanent masters of their lands.

They looked to the interests of the peasants and their lands, and collected revenue from them.

... and this is where he committed the mistake of comparing apples to oranges!

He thought of creating a class of hereditary landlords in India who should become permanent masters of their lands. *He did not realise that Indian Zamindars had no love of land, or the love for people but anyway,* in 1793 (his last year of governorship), he instituted Permanent Settlement in Bihar, Bengal & Orissa.

1. Permanent Settlement recognized the landlords as the proprietors of the land.
2. The landlords were given the right to transfer or sell their lands if they liked.
3. Of course, all their rights ended if they failed to pay the revenue.
4. Interestingly, once settled, the tax rate would not increase in future, hence the name – permanent settlement.



Ques: In the interest of time & space, we would require readers to tell us the merits and demerits of Permanent Settlement. Quick bullet points would do.


Do you guys remember the Pitt's Act of 1784?

That act was amended in 1786 so as enable him to overrule the decision of the majority of his council, if necessary.



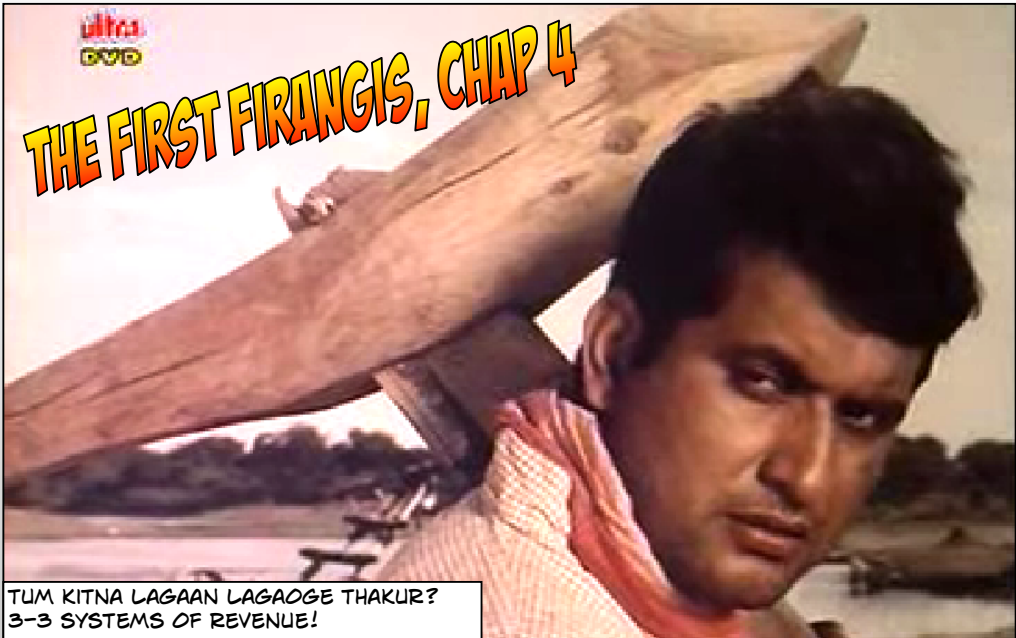
Reforms under Cornwallis would spread out in 3 major areas:

1. Administrative Reforms – You already read about it, above.
2. Judicial Reforms – Suffice to know that he was ably assisted by Sir William Jones in reorganising the civil & criminal court.
3. Police Reforms – Remember the old hindi movies with Ranjeet playing the odd ball police guy who used to extort nicities out of the hapless heroine, well, that DAROGA was Cornwallis' creation!

In the words of Marsh-man, 'the daroga enjoyed almost unlimited power of extortion and became the scourge of the country'. 

Every aspirant worth his salt would be aware of the 3 land revenue systems employed by the British to extract heavy booty from India. We trust you to fall in the same category but no harm revising some concepts, right?

Extracting Land Revenue



THE THREE FIRANGIS...



TRIMURTI OF REVENUE SYSTEMS

CORNWALLIS | THOMAS MUNRO | HOLT MACKENZIE

Before we dig into the systems, let's try to understand the land holdings/revenue systems that existed in the pre-British (Mughal) times.

The country was not governed as a single unit with a single set of rules. The society was very diverse and so were the land holdings. We had the Khalisa Land, the Jagirs, the Mansabs, the Zamindari lands, etc. What's important to note here was that these land owners had occupancy rights not propriety rights. So the concept of Private Property was absent. One couldn't buy and sell property in the market like a commodity. This changes with the new policies of the British.

Circling back to the land revenue systems –

- **Permanent Settlement:** The first of its kind in Bengal, Bihar & Orissa. Instituted by Lord Cornwallis (true blue aristocrat).
- **Ryotwari:** Thomas Munroe got this up and working in Madras, Bombay and Assam. He had some tough time convincing the Brits to not go for Permanent Settlement here!
- **Mahalwari:** North India, parts of western and central India – Company outsourced the revenue collection to village communities itself.

Enough has been written and lectured about these 3 and UPSC probably won't ask anything off it again but then, we thought, that it might just swoop in and churn out some heavy analytical stuff to trip you off.

#1. Why was there a need to bring about Ryotwari, Mahalwari and whatever-wari when you already had Permanent Settlement?

#2. Can you relate these changes in land revenue ideologies with what was happening in the English society? Like marry these policy changes with changes in ideologies etc etc!

#3. Did new systems actually solve anything or did we just dabble in theories?

Something like that... you never know! These days IAS Mains is witnessing a mix of pretty obvious/ complex sawaal jawaab.

Since the grant of diwani for Bengal, Bihar & Orissa in 1765, the major concern for the EIC was to get more & more revenue. **Why such greed?**

That's because of an amazing economic concept called **Mercantilism** which guided EIC's efforts to make sure that the salary packages of their Indian troops come from India itself. No chance of a money transfer for any of the Indian expenditures!

[back2basics]

Mercantilism was the idea that the only true measure of a country's wealth and success was the amount of gold that it had. If one country had more gold than another, it was necessarily better off. So essentially, you need to manage your imports and exports in such a way that exports >> imports.

If you want a heavier definition, here's what wiki says, "Mercantilism includes a national economic policy aimed at accumulating monetary reserves through a positive balance of trade, especially unfinished goods." This will let the country save more gold for itself and be better off.

Naturally, England did not want to ship off its accrued gold to India to pay for EIC's expenses and hence these guys had one & only one goal –

“Collect as much money as you can get boys”

We read in the previous chapter of this series that in 1784, Cornwallis was sent to India with a specific mandate to streamline the revenue administration. And he thought that one way to solve the problem of corruption in revenue management was to permanently fix the revenue.

“Assessment for ever”, that was the funda behind Permanent Settlement. The period of settlement was ~10 years (unless you default). And even with all the caveats in place, it did not reap fruitful results. We have covered most of this system in the previous post.

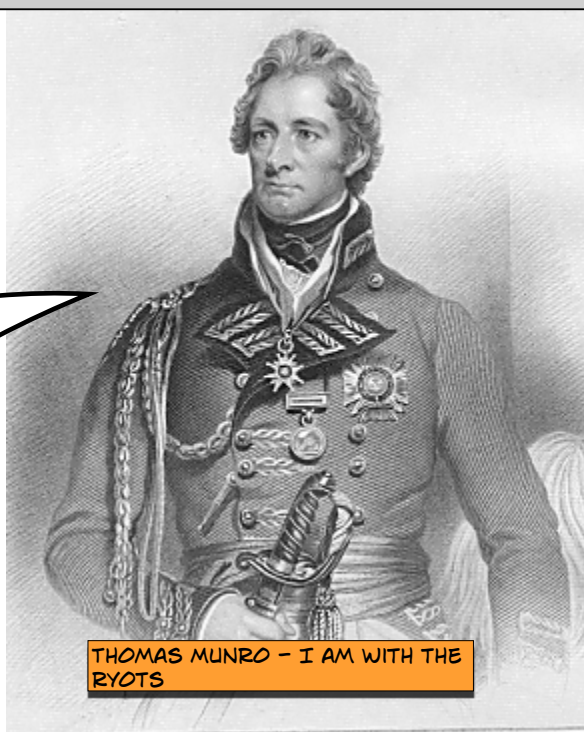
At this time, you would do well to introduce yourself with a new powerful class in making, **The Jotedars.**



ON THE CONTRARY...
POWER TO THE AAM AADMI IN
THE RYOTWARI OF MADRAS

WHY FIX THE REVENUE
PERMANENTLY FOR YEARS
WHEN YOU CAN REVIEW IT
ANNUALLY!

WHAT IF THERE IS AN
INFLATION THE NEXT YEAR?
AND SARKAR WANTS MORE
LAGAAN ;)



[back2basics]

Don't confuse them with Zamindars. The Zamindars used to often live in Urban areas but these Jotedars were located within the villages and exercised direct control over a considerable section of poor villagers. When a Zamindar defaulted on his due, these guys would swoop in and bid a higher price in the re-auction. And these badasses made a lot of money!

In comes Thomas Munro & his Ryotwari experiment

Two major differences between these two guys & hence the different policies.

1. **Cornwallis** believed in rule of law & old school brit wisdom of replicating what worked at their home (England).
2. **Thomas Munro** (in Madras) & some of his minions in western and northern India believed that *we need to pay heed to Indian tradition & experience, empower the aam aadmi & ask him to become a ryot and pay up the price!*

Hence, **Thomas Munro** made an elaborate speech and contrary to Lord Cornwallis' assessment, he instituted Ryotwari system in his command. Some say that he was inspired by the way Tipu Sultan used to administer revenue of his subjects (similar system – his military personnel used to collect revenue from individual farmers).

Life of a farmer in a Ryotwari System?

1. You will wake up in one of these parts of India – Madras, Bombay, Assam, Sind.
2. You will have a piece of land to yourself – do whatever the hell you want, grow food crop/ cash crop, mortgage the land, **but at the end of the year – you need to pay up tax (in cash).**


3. If you default, then you are kicked out (pretty much the expected outcome).
4. You might go to money lenders and get loans for yourself (at times of drought, famines etc etc.) – which is a tragedy in waiting! More loans & indebtedness.
5. Your rents won't be the same – apparently Brits will assess the soil worthiness of your land and can frequently update their assessment.

Last of all – Mahalwari or the pseudo Zamindari system

Why was it called pseudo zamindari?

Mahals were essentially a unit of land measurement in Punjab & Central India and **Lambardars** were heads (like zamindars) who were responsible for the collection of revenue.

Mahalwari = mix of Permanent Settlement + Ryotwari was started by **Holt Mackenzie**.

1. In this system, the land was divided into Mahals. Each Mahal comprises one or more villages.
2. Ownership rights were vested with the peasants.
3. The village committee was held responsible for collection of the taxes. Here's where the Lambardar comes in and collects revenue. 

If Robert Clive is credited to have won the first hand for EIC and Warren Hastings credited with consolidation of the British ascendancy in India, then it would be no big exaggeration to say that the Marquess of Wellesley was the guy who converted 'the British Empire in India' into 'the British Empire of India'.

Like a Boss. #swag #subsidiary alliance

THE FIRST FIRANGIS - CHAP 5



THE MARQUESS OF WELLESLEY

ALREADY FED UP WITH THE LOSS OF TERRITORIES IN AMERICA POST THEIR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

AND NOW THIS FRENCH BUGGER NAPOLEON IS SCHEMING WITH TIPIU IN INDIA....

MUST-ACT-FAST.



COMPREHENSIVELY DEFEATED TIPIU SULTAN IN THE 4TH ANGLO-MYSORE WAR

EXTENDED THE DOMINATION OF SUBSIDIARY ALLIANCE WITH NATIVES



2ND WAR WITH MARATHAS AND GOT BHONSLE & SCINDIA UNDER CONTROL....

British Empire in India was under a lot of mess before Wellesley's arrival

1. In the north-western India (the Af-Pak side), the danger of Zaman Shah's aggression posed a serious threat to the British power in India.
2. In the north and central India, the Marathas remained a formidable political power.
3. The Nizam of Hyderabad employed the Frenchmen to train his army.
4. The political unrest in the Karnataka region continued and Tipu Sultan was pain in the arse.

In comes the imperialist Wellesley & his system of Subsidiary Alliance

He wasn't the first guy to come up with the novel idea of extracting a booty from the rulers in exchange for firangi service, his predecessors had concluded alliances with Indian princes like the Nawab of Oudh and the Nizam of Hyderabad.

But, Wellesley enlarged and consolidated the already existing system. If you were a king back then, this is how your agreement would look like.

1. You are hereby given the status of a 'protected state', in lieu of which you will have to maintain a large standing army commanded by a British officer.
2. That means, even if you do not have war, these guys would be paid a salary + your soldiers would be paid a pink slip and send off!
3. You cannot keep any french/ portuguese/ european nationality in your court. The only firangi you will talk to would be a Brit. And just to make sure, we will have a british resident deployed in your court.
4. You may, however do whatever you want in terms of your internal matters. But your external relations will be observed by us.


The kingdoms which succumbed to this policy were – Hyderabad, Oudh, Tanjore, Surat, Karnatak and after much resistance – the Marathas (Holkars & Scindia).

You might at this time wonder whether our Indian rulers were so ill-equipped that they lost the wars that easily? That's hardly the case. But to do justice with that, we will need to take a fresh digression to look at the wars which were fought with Mysore & Marathas.

Will do that in the next chapter.

Two questions for you –

#1. What's with the name – Marquess of Wellesley. What's Marquess?

#2. It was said that Tipu had a Jacobin club in his capital. What was that and why did it worry the Brits? 

If we were to draw a quick strip for you (being the ruler), these were the 3 prominent outcomes of the deal for you.

THE GOOD

SUBSIDIARY SYSTEM HAD A DEMORALISING EFFECT ON THE PRINCES OF THE PROTECTED STATES.

THEY IGNORED ADMINISTRATION & INDULGED IN EXCESSES....

... MUCH LIKE KING JOFFREY



NOW WE ARE A *PROTECTED STATE* OF THE *PARAMOUNT POWER* OF BRITS!



DIE, DIE, MY GLORIOUS KING. DIE.

THE BAD

IN COURSE OF TIME... WHEN THE ANARCHY AND MISRULE SPREAD.... BRITS WERE QUICK ON THEIR FEAT TO GET RID OF THE KING COMPLETELY...

AND...

ANNEX THE STATE!

THE UGLY


IF INDIAN PRINCES FIRE THE EXISTING SOLDIERS (COZ THEY HAVE TO STATION THE FIRANGI TROOPS), WHAT WOULD THE EXISTING SOLDIERS DO??

BECOME PINDARI, WHAT ELSE!



SALMAN KHAN, IN AND AS "PINDARI!"

Trivia



**74 newscards | Hand curated
summaries
of the most
relevant news
items**

[op-ed snap] The need for unifying agricultural markets

- First, to ensure ease of doing business, it integrated 51 of the 155 main market yards and 354 sub-yards into a **single licensing system**.
- Second, for improving efficiency and transparency, it introduced **automated auction and post-auction facilities**.
- Third, to guarantee quality, **assaying facilities** were made available in the markets.
- Finally, It linked all APMCs in the state **electronically**, and enabled the discovery of a **single state price** for every commodity on a single platform.

[b2b] What is the National Mission on Bamboo Applications (NMBA)?

- The units/entrepreneurs supported by NMBA had approached for **technology development assistance** (TDA) in the form of machinery/equipment for their new or existing ventures.
- NMBA has been providing support in the form of **marketing participation** in national and international level exhibitions.
- **Assam** was the first Indian state to use bamboo-generated power under NMBA.
- India is the **second highest** bamboo-producing country after China.
- **More than 55%** of India's annual bamboo crop is grown in the northeast.

Mizoram to be developed as 'bamboo State'

- The State of Mizoram is blessed with **very high production of bamboo**.
- It can be turned into a major source, not only for **furniture** but also for **paper supply** to the rest of the country.
- This could, not only generate revenue for the State, but also create **opportunities for youth** outside India.

Male child still preferred, show Census data

- The **prenatal sex determination** and **repeated pregnancies** are two processes around the preference for a male child are going on simultaneously in India.
- The families with fewer or no sons were the ones choosing to have **repeated pregnancies**.
- The data shows that at every family size, there were **more boys** born than girls.

Smart cities asked to provide for Piped Natural Gas supply and CNG stations

- Govt. has asked the States and Urban Local Bodies(ULBs) to provide for **PNG supply and CNG stations** in the cities selected for development as Smart Cities.
- They were asked to ensure **convergence** of various schemes of the Central Govt aimed at enhancing energy supply.
- It urged the ULBs to ensure speedy approvals for laying **City Gas Distribution** (CGD) Pipelines in smart cities.
- It also asked them to ensure **Roof Top based solar power generation** as a part of measures to ensure that **10% of energy demand** is met from solar power.
- They should make use of infrastructure being provided for enabling smart solutions for **video-monitoring of crimes**, effective management of water, power, traffic, solid waste etc.

[b2b] Let's know more about Blue revolution?

- Blue Revolution means the adoption of a package programme to increase the production of fish and marine products.
- The Blue Revolution in India was started in 1970 during the **Fifth Five-Year Plan**.
- When the Central Government sponsored the **Fish Farmers Development Agency** (FFDA).
- It has brought improvement in aquaculture by adopting new techniques of fish breeding, fish rearing, fish marketing, and fish export.
- The **Nellore** District of Andhra Pradesh is known as the '**Shrimp Capital of India**'.

India test-fires indigenously developed interceptor missile

- As part of efforts to develop a full fledged **multi-layer Ballistic Missile** Defence system.
- India has test-fired **indigenously developed** supersonic interceptor missile, capable of destroying any incoming ballistic missile.
- The interceptor, known as **Advanced Air Defence** (AAD) missile, was engaged against an electronically prepared target which simulated the trajectory of a hostile ballistic missile.
- The interceptor AAD missile has been indigenously developed by **DRDO** under Ballistic Missile Defence Programme.

Panel rejects demand on graded rates for military service pay

- The pay panel has rejected the demands on **graded rates for military service pay**, incentives for select ranks from Colonels to Lt Generals and inclusion of Lt Generals in higher income group.
- The commission accepted that the **nature of duties** of the armed forces is unique and calls for retention of MSP.
- To make **Short Service Commission more attractive**, the panel recommended that SSC officers be allowed to retire anytime between 7 to 10 years of service.
- **Non-functional Upgradation** should be extended to the officers of the defence forces and Central Armed Police Forces.

PPP revival: Kelkar panel submits report to Arun Jaitley

- FM made an announcement regarding re-visiting the existing PPP mode to execute such projects, in 2015-16 Budget.
- PPP projects which were **doing well** for quite some time have run into various kinds of problems, in recent years.
- It was entrusted to suggest ways on **improving capacity building** within the govt. for effective implementation of PPP projects.

Govt. to introduce portal to support innovation

- A separate portal would be established under Department of Electronics and IT, aiming to **push innovation** in the country.
- It will enable innovators to **seek govt. support** for their ideas and products.
- Anyone who innovates can put up his innovation on the portal and the department will follow it.
- The **grassroots level innovation** built in such a manner will lead the way towards achieving a truly Digital India.

Cybercrime hit half of India's Net users: study

- The security services firm Norton says that nearly **half of India's netizens** affected by cyber-crime during the past year.
- Despite the threat of cybercrime in India, it hasn't led to widespread adoption of **simple protection measures** to safeguard information online.
- There are only 41% people who use a **secure password**, despite the concerns towards cybercrime.
- Besides the financial loss, there is an **emotional impact** as well.

[b2b] Let's dive into Housing for All Mission?

- It is scheme which proposes to build **2 crore houses** across the nation **by 2022**.
- Scheme implemented as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** (CSS) except credit linked subsidy component, which implemented as Central Sector Scheme.
- Scheme prescribes certain mandatory reforms for easing up urban land market for housing, to make adequate urban land available for **affordable housing**.
- Houses constructed would be allotted in the name of female head of households or in joint name of male head of household and his wife.
- **Technology Sub-mission** will set up to facilitate adoption of modern, innovative and green technologies and building material for faster and quality construction of houses.

Trivia

[b2b] What is Enable Makeathon?

- It helps create **new assistive devices** for persons with **disabilities** living in **rural areas** across the world.
- It is motivated by the spirit of broad collaboration with the government, the private sector, the academia as well as other interested individuals.
- It is a 60-day programme by end of which participants, including technology and design experts, persons with disabilities and mentors.
- It would have developed **solutions** and products for persons with disabilities in the **form of prototypes**.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, partners ICRC for Enable Makeathon

- Union ministry of **Social Justice and Empowerment** has partnered with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for Enable Makeathon.
- **Enable Makeathon** is a project initiated by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and its partners.

[b2b] Lets explore more about Garo Hills

- The Garo Hills is a part of the **Garo-Khasi range** in Meghalaya
- It is inhabited mainly by **tribal dwellers**, the majority of whom are Garo people.
- It is one of the **wettest places** in the world, comprising of the 5 districts.
- Abductions have become the order of the day in the Garo Hills region of Meghalaya, by different unidentified groups.

[b2b] What exactly is Disinvestment?

- It is an act of **selling shares** not exceeding 49% in profit-making public sector companies at a market premium.
- The objective is to **raise money** for the govt. to reduce its fiscal deficit.
- As a word of caution, govt. will not go for disinvestment of more than **25% of its stake**, for fears of strategic investor.

- As majority of the decisions of PSUs need to be approved by **3/4th majority**, they can be blocked, if govt. has less than 75% stake.
- Strategic Investor is any person/group of person holding **26% of the shares**.

[b2b] Who are Kashmiri Migrants?

- Kashmiri migrants constitute **mostly of Hindus (Kashmiri Pandits)** and some Sikh and Muslim families.
- They had to migrate because of **militancy and terrorist violence**.
- Most of the families got **settled or sought refuge** in and around Jammu city and some in the other states of the country.
- Kashmiri Pandits are a distinct, **ethno-cultural entity** and a **tiny minority** from a Muslim-majority valley, now living in “exile” across India.
- The first batch of Pandits left Kashmir in **January 1990**.
- The Pandit advocacy groups have blamed J&K Liberation Front for the **exodus**.

[b2b] What is Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 ?

- HFA 2005-2015 : Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards.
- It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly, following **2005 World Disaster Reduction Conference**.
- HFA outlines five priorities for action, and offers guiding principles and practical means for achieving **disaster resilience**.
- To reducing loss of lives and social, economic, and environmental assets when hazards strike.

[b2b] Look at 4 priorities for Action under the Sendai Framework?

- Understanding disaster risk.
- Strengthening disaster **risk governance** to manage disaster risk.
- **Investing** in disaster risk reduction for resilience
- Enhancing disaster **preparedness** for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

[b2b] Let's get aware of Sendai Framework?

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- It adopted in Third UN World Conference on **Disaster Risk Reduction** held in Sendai, Japan in 2015.
- Involves adopting integrated and inclusive institutional measures, in preventing vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery and strengthen resilience.
- It is **non-binding** agreement, recognizes that State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk with shared responsibility.
- This is the successor instrument to **Hyogo Framework** for Action (HFA) 2005-2015.

UN confers Kiren Rijiju with Disaster Risk Reduction Asia Champion honour

- He has been designated for Asia Region by **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** (UNISDR).
- The honour was conferred at inaugural session of the Asia Leaders' Meeting towards Implementation of **Sendai Framework for DRR** in Asia.
- Rijiju is the **first regional champion** for DRR after the Sendai Agreement.
- He is also the **first Indian** to be conferred with this honour.

Tianhe-2 is the world's most powerful supercomputer

- China's Tianhe-2 has retained its position as the world's most powerful system for **sixth consecutive time**.
- Tianhe-2, or Milky Way2, with a performance of **33.86** petaflops per second (Pflop/s).
- Developed by China's National University of Defense Technology and deployed at the National Supercomputer Center in Guangzhou.
- Supercomputer Titan of the US Department of Energy has been placed at second position.

Justice T.S. Thakur is the next Chief Justice of India

- Justice Tirath Singh Thakur, who is the seniormost judge after the Chief Justice, will be **43rd** Chief Justice of India.
- He had worked as Chief Justice of both Delhi High Court and Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- He was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court in 2009.
- In Supreme Court, Justice Thakur had headed of the bench which dealt with **IPL spot-fixing scam** and **Saradha chit fund scam** case.

CCEA approves 10% stake sale in CIL

- The CCEA approved a 10% disinvestment in Coal India, the **3rd govt. stake sale** in the company's history.
- At the company's current market capitalisation, it will fetch the govt. around **Rs. 21,100 crore**.
- This will go a long way in meeting the disinvestment target of **Rs.69,500 crore** for this financial year.
- Till now, the govt. was able to sell its stake in **only 4 companies** — Power Finance Corporation, Rural Electrification Corporation, Dredging Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation.
- The Dept. of Disinvestment has asked for the disinvestment target to be **brought down** to Rs.30,000 crore.

[b2b] What does Maternal and Neonatal mortality actually mean?

- A neonatal death is defined as a death during the **first 28 days of life** (0-27 days).
- **56%** of under-5 child mortality in India is from neonatal mortality.
- Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or **within 42 days** of termination of pregnancy.
- India accounts for the **maximum no.** of maternal and neonatal deaths in the world.
- **Literacy and social issues** are major factors that have led to high maternal deaths.

Next generation missile to be test-fired

- **Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile** (LR-SAM), which can intercept incoming targets at a range of **80 km**.
- LR-SAM, also known as **Barak NG** (next generation), co-developed by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).
- Missile has been successfully test-fired against a flying target in Israel in November 2014.

NSCN-K declared terror outfit

- National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K), a group which is allegedly responsible for killing of 18 army personnel in Manipur.
- NSCN-K and all its front organizations declared as terrorist organization under **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**.
- NSCN (K) is an offshoot of NSCN, formed in 1988, under leadership of S.S. Khaplang.
- Objective is to forming a sovereign **state of Nagalim** by unifying all the areas inhabited by the Naga people in **Northeast India and Myanmar**.

[b2b] What does JSY intend to do?

- Janani Suraksha Yojana was launched in 2005 to reduce Maternal Mortality rate and increase institutional deliveries.
- The scheme offers a cash assistance package starting from Rs 700 up to Rs 2,000 to women in rural areas and Rs 600 up to Rs 1000 in Urban areas.
- The special focus was on Low Performing States and Empowered Action Group States such as UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and MP.

Does increased spending mean improved maternal mortality?

- The Central government has spent Rs 12,330 crores under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) in the last 10 years and 8,37,19,668 have availed the scheme since its inception.
- The scheme saw an **increased spending of 20%** between 2009-10 and 2014-15.

- **Institutional Deliveries** increased from 38.7% to **72.9%** since the launch of JSY.
- Kerala, MH and TN have **MMR of below 100** with Andhra Pradesh and WB likely to follow soon.
- Despite considerable **dropdown** in MMR, Empowered Action Group states along with Assam have a lot of ground to cover.
- Of the total JSY beneficiaries reported in 2014-15, nearly **87% belong to rural areas**.

India's Internet user base to touch 402 mn by December, surpassing U.S.

- A report released by Internet and Mobile Association of India and IMRB International shows that **no. of Internet users** in India is expected to touch 402 million by December.
- It will be a **49% jump** over last year, making India home to the **2nd largest** online user base after China.
- Currently, India has the **3rd largest** Internet user base in the world after China and the U.S.
- The report points that 71% **male** and 29% **female** are Internet users in India.
- Internet users in **rural India** are expected to reach 117 million by December.

[b2b] What's all the fuss with NOTA?

- In a major electoral reform, in 2014, SC mandated Election commission to introduce NOTA on the EVMs.
- **NOTA** = None Of The Above, **EVM** = Electronic voting machine
- The EVMs now have the NOTA option at the end of the candidates' list.
- **Earlier**, in order to cast a negative ballot, a voter had to inform the presiding officer at the polling booth.

Era of coal shortage is over: Piyush Goyal

- India would not need to import coal by 2017, except to meet requirements of power plants located near the coastal area, where it is very difficult to transmit coal.
- In October, coal imports fell for the 4th consecutive month, mainly due to an **increase in domestic production**.

- India had **imported** 212.103 million tonnes of coal worth over Rs.1 lakh crore last fiscal.
- However, India is the **3rd largest producer** of coal after China and the US

India, Australia seal N-deal procedures

- The procedures for a civil nuclear agreement with Australia for supply of uranium has been **completed**
- This opens doors for the much-needed **uranium supply** for India's nuclear reactors.
- India will be the 1st country to buy Australian uranium without being a **signatory to the NPT**.
- The significant part of the agreement is that Australia agreed to become a **long-term reliable supplier** of uranium to India.

[b2b] What is NSDL - National Securities Depository Limited?

- NSDL is a share depository in India. Think of them just like you imagine a bank.
- While a bank holds your cash and fixed deposits, they hold shares, debentures, bonds etc., for all shareholders in the electronic form.
- When you open a demat account your shares are held by these depositories.
- NSDL provides the virtual in and out transactions on your shares, debentures.

Households with income of Rs. 10 lakh may lose LPG subsidy

- The Union government is actively examining discontinuation of subsidies such as the one given on domestic LPG cylinders.
- If you belong to a household having an annual income of >10L, then you might have to worry!

British financial aid to propel Pune's 'smart city' dream

- David Cameron has announced British **technical and financial aid** to develop Pune, Amravati and Indore.
- U.K. would enter into a **5-year partnership** to develop these cities.
- British companies with their world-class **consulting, project management and engineering skills**, will help plan, design and build these new cities.

New Chapter LIVE: The First Firangis

- Every aspirant worth his salt would be aware of the 3 land revenue systems employed by the Brits to extract heavy booty from India.
- We trust you to fall in the same category but no harm revising some concepts, right?
- Go to civildaily.com and read the new comic

Subir Gokarn appointed ED at IMF

- Former Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Subir Gokarn is now spearheading the Indian Constituency at IMF.
- Mr. Gokarn's name was cleared by Appointments Committee of Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Call drop penalty to cost telcos Rs. 200 cr per quarter

- And before the telecom operators make a cry out of it, they were reminded that,
- This is **less than one%** of total revenues that you make!
- The organisations which represent these telecom operators wrote back saying,
- These orders would force them to increase rates to recover costs.
- Let's see what 2016 has for us and them.

Trivia

[b2b] Is international law any good to resolve the S. China sea dispute?

- Well, China has been challenged by Philippines at the the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

What's the motion?

- Philippines' rights to exploit the 200-nautical mile **Exclusive Economic Zone** that extends from the archipelago into the South China Sea!
- Both countries abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (**UNCLOS**).
- But China scoffed at the claims, so meh!

[b2b] What the hell is APEC? How many associations are there!

- **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation** = forum of 21 Pacific Rim member countries that promote free trade throughout Asia-Pacific region.
- Member economies include USA and China. Of course India is not a part.
- India does not border the Pacific Ocean, which all current members do.
- Interestingly, this forum was established coz asian countries feared Japan's growing influence in the G8 group!

[b2b] Explore more about BIS

- Established on 17 May 1930, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) is the world's **oldest international financial organisation**.
- It has 60 member central banks, representing countries from around the world that together make up about **95% of world GDP**.
- It is an international organization fostering the **cooperation of central banks** and international monetary policy makers.
- The BIS board comprise all central bankers and meets at least 6 times a year.

[b2b] What is this concept of ITE in Singapore?

- The Institute of Technical Education (ITE), which offers 100 such vocational courses.
- Singapore emulated Switzerland and Germany model to set up ITEs that produce craftsmen and skilled workers.
- Most students in ITEs are from poor socio-economic backgrounds and almost 93% of the fee is subsidised by the govt.
- The idea behind the ITE is that you cannot divorce education system from the economic activity in the country.

UDAY lays thrust on 4 initiatives for financial turnaround of Discoms

- Improving operational efficiencies of DISCOMs.
- Reduction of cost of power.
- Reduction in interest cost of DISCOMs.
- Enforcing financial discipline on DISCOMs through alignment with State finances.

Nestlé starts selling Maggi noodles in India again

- Maggi sales resume across India, barring eight states.
- The company also partnered with Snapdeal to roll out online offers to mark the relaunch.

Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation: New initiative

- Launched by the Ministry of Science and Technology to strengthen research in the areas of yoga and meditation.
- **Why?** To harness knowledge obtained in academic institutions and other agencies for finding Science and Technology -led solutions.
- It enables government to cope with stress and strain associated with fast changing social, economic, environmental and professional circumstances.

[b2b] What are stem cells?

- Stem cells have remarkable potential to develop into many different cell types in the body during early life and growth.
- In many tissues they serve as a sort of internal repair system, dividing essentially without limit to replenish other cells.
- **In short, they capable of renewing themselves through cell division.**
- Such as, muscle cell, red blood cell, or brain cell.

Indian Army successfully test fires Brahmos missile

- Brahmos supersonic land attack cruise missile test fired at Pokhran in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan.
- It was test fired from an **Autonomous Mobile Launcher** (AML) in full configuration and met all the mission objectives.
- It is a **fire-and-forget Missile**.
- It has capability of **destroying surface-based targets** by flying a combined high-low trajectory by evading enemy air defence systems.

[b2b] What is Indian Infosec Consortium (IIC)?

- IIC is a group of Nation's leading **Information Security experts** and **researchers** which has a large number of Cyber Security member professionals in India.
- They protect economy of nation and its cyberspace from continuous security threats posed by hackers.
- **A non-for-profit** Section-25 organization, IIC makes policy recommendations in domains of **IT, Cyber security, Research, innovation** to Indian Government.

Why One Rank One Pension notification did not satisfy ex-servicemen?

- The veterans wanted equalisation of pension every year, or at least every 2 years.
- But the government has notified that it would happen only once in 5 years.

Can you explain OROP in one sentence?

- OROP means military personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service would get the same pension.

[b2b] What do we mean by demographic dividend?

- India's Demographic Dividend has been a global talking point for quite some time.
- People use the term without even knowing what it actually mean!
- In easy terms, while the whole world is aging, India has a significant percentage of population in the young age category.
- Technically, falling birth rates + increased longevity ensures that a large chunk of population is in the working age (15-59 years).

Are there any side effects of the DISCOM revival plan launched?

- DISCOMs = State electricity boards. We are talking about the latest plan launched, remember?
- Even though it is a center sponsored bailout, states will have to pay the interest, which could be interpreted as something eating into their finances.
- What will happen if the state governments continue to fund losses without rationalizing tariffs?
- This is another burden on the state govs. and they have failed last time when such a bailout was launched in 2012.

[b2b] 3 things you need to know about GEAC

- **GEAC** = Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee
- **Apex body** for approving trials and commercialization of genetically engineered crops.
- Constituted in the Ministry of Environment and Forests under **Environment Protection Act, 1986**.

Sarson Satyagraha against genetically modified (GM) mustard

- A group of farmer organisations are up against Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee for approving trials and commercialisation of GM Mustard.
- **Why?** They say there is no special demand for GM Mustard, then why bring it into picture at all.
- The buzz words are - introduction of an unneeded, unwanted, unsafe, irreversible and uncontrollable technology!
- Quite a heavy retaliation, we must say.

[b2b] What is Congestion Tax?

- Think of it as the **surge pricing of Uber** where they increase tariffs of cabs to manage the supply wastage.
- In practical terms, it is a method used to **reduce traffic** by charging a fee to road users during **rush hours**.
- Aimed at reducing traffic congestion and **improving air quality**, the tax collected can be used for infrastructure development.
- The idea comes from a tax being levied on vehicles entering congested areas in **Stockholm**, to discourage them from entering such lanes.

India-Russia military exercise 'INDRA-2015'

- To develop the capabilities to **combat international terrorism** and to counter the evolving threats.
- Exercise is seventh edition in a continuing series of annual bilateral exercise under this banner, conducted in Bikaner.
- Focus of exercise will be on **Counter terrorism operations** in backdrop of desert terrain under a United Nations mandate.

Mizoram, Meghalaya have best gender parity across India, report says

- **Best gender parity** in Mizoram, Meghalaya, Kerala, Goa, and Sikkim have been rated in line with Argentina, China, or Indonesia.
- Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and UP grouped as **India's bottom five** states on gender parity.
- Top five states account for just 4% of India's female working-age population, Bottom five comprise a larger 32%.
- Indian women face extremely high inequality, associated with physical security, autonomy and high inequality on child marriage.
- A new score, **India Female Empowerment Index** or **Femdex**, based on a sub-set of 10 of the 15 indicators at the state level in India.

[b2b] Why are these Power Discoms so stressed?

- DISCOMs = Electricity distribution firms
- The DISCOMs are suffering on account of the **politics of free power, repressed tariffs and power thefts**.

Is that it? What else is bugging them?

- **Power subsidies** given for all irrespective of rich or poor, high transmission losses, **poor infrastructure** and low standards of **management**.
- DISCOMs in the states of Rajasthan, UP, TN and Haryana are among the **most stressed**.

Cabinet clears financial reform package for discoms

- The Union Cabinet has approved a reform package for **loss-making electricity utilities**.
- This will allow for the transfer of 75% of the about Rs 4.3 lakh crore outstanding debt incurred by stressed discoms to States' debt.
- The Centre aims to help states in **wiping out** the discoms' losses by 2019.
- The decision is also expected to **help the banks** in managing their bad loans.
- The scheme is named **Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana** and it will be optional for States.

Democracy suspended in the Maldives

- President Abdulla Yameen declared a **state of emergency** in the Maldives citing danger to the lives of the citizens and threat to national security.
- The emergency measures effectively snatches away the **freedoms** that followed the August 2008 Constitution.
- The Emergency was imposed to **pre-empt a mass rally** by the main Opposition Maldivian Democratic Party, which could have **negatively impacted** the law and order situation.
- Critics point that the emergency is one of the tool in the hands of the Maldivian govt. to crack down on **political opponents**.

Panagaria for cooperative federalism in higher education

- NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson pitched for idea of “**cooperative, competitive federalism**” to be implemented in the field of higher education.
- This will enable the **best practices** of one State can be replicated in the others, instead of borrowing ideas from other cultures and countries.
- There is a huge variation in the learning curve within India and the achievements made by a few States could easily be adopted by the others.
- He credited the **proliferation** of engineering and management colleges both in the **public and private sector** for the growth that India saw in the past few decades.

BrahMos missile test-fired from INS Kochi

- INS Kochi is a **7,500-tonne indigenously** developed **warship**
- It has new design concepts for survivability, stealth and manoeuvrability.
- It can carry 16 BrahMos missiles in two eight-cell vertical launch systems.
- BrahMos is a two stage missile, jointly developed **by India and Russia**.
- It can fly at a **supersonic speed** of 2.8 Mach and at a height of 10m.
- It carries **conventional warheads** and launched from ships, land and submarines.

Fast patrol vessel ICGS Arinjay commissions in Kochi

- **Fast patrol vessel** (FPV) of **Aadesh-Class of Indian** Coast Guard, ICGS Arinjay was commissioned in Kochi, Kerala.
- It can achieve a maximum speed of **33 knots** with an endurance of 1500 nautical miles at economical speed of 13 knots.
- It will be used for **Anti-smuggling and anti-piracy** activities and also for search and rescue operation.
- Fisheries protection and monitoring activities and increases protection level of India's exclusive economic zone (**EEZ**).

First Scorpene class submarine set afloat in Mumbai

- Kalvari is **first of the Scorpene class stealth submarines** built under the **Project 75**, under collaboration with M/s DCNS, France.
- The Scorpene class submarines are a class of **diesel-electric attack** submarine developed by the French DCN and the Spanish company Navantia.
- It features **AIP technology**, which allows a non-nuclear submarine to operate without the need to access atmospheric oxygen.

Return of Bru tribal refugees to Mizoram still uncertain

- **Bru or Reang families left Mizoram in 1997** in the wake of **ethnic violence** to take shelter at Kanchanpur in north Tripura.
- Effort of the Union Home Affairs Ministry to end the impasse over relocation of more than 30,000 Mizoram Bru tribal refugees has failed.
- The problem arose as the Mizoram government reiterated its decision to check the credentials of evacuees before paving the way for their return.

All govt. financial transactions to be made digital

- The Centre is planning an **e-route for all govt. transactions**, including receipts and payments, as part of Digital India programme.
- The department will create a **common application** that can be used by all ministries.
- To make it an **inclusive programme** and accessible to all, govt. is planning to bring 100 government websites in 3 languages.
- The govt. is working with mobile phone manufacturers to support at least 3 **vernacular** languages in feature phones.

ITBP too takes women on board

- The Indo-Tibetan Border Police has decided to **deploy women personnel in combat duties** at its high-altitude posts along the Indo-China border.
- The force is training a **special contingent** of 500 mahila constables for the task.
- This is the **first time** that ITBP is deploying women personnel in **full combat role** right at the border.

Earthquakes can alter elastic properties of Earth's crust: study

- Change the elastic properties of the Earth's crust up to **6,000km away**, altering its ability to withstand stresses for up to a few weeks.
- Earth is a dynamic and interconnected system, where one large earthquake can create a **cascading sequence of events** thousands of kilometres away.
- When a surface wave from an earthquake some way off passes through another fault region.
- It changes the balance between the **frictional properties** that keep the surfaces locked together.
- The elasticity that allows the crust to withstand strain, and the stress state that can cause it to fail.

Tsunami early Warning system successfully tested in Mumbai

- Newly-installed **Tsunami Early Warning System Siren** was successfully tested near INS Angre in south Mumbai.
- It tested nearly 11 years after the Boxing Day tsunami which had hit the east coast of India and had killed more than 10,000 people.
- It has a **digital electronic board** fitted in the system which gives out data about the approaching tsunami.
- The system has a radical range of **3 kms** in all directions and gives continuous **hoot for 60 seconds** during emergency.
- 7 tsunami buoys with sensors will record the speed and height of waves.

NDRF ties up with 30 PSUs to tackle disasters

- The first of its kind initiative aimed to ensure efforts for building a good synergy between the government organisations.
- NDRF has proposed to train personnel of these PSUs by extending its skill modules for tackling disasters.
- NDRF is India's elite **disaster mitigation combat force** established under **Disaster Management Act, 2005**.
- It functions under the aegis of **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- It undertakes relief and rescue operations in the case of an event of any disaster (natural or man-made), accident or emergency.

A model to conserve indigenous paddy varieties

- A model evolved for applying traditional wisdom in farming helped in conserving **indigenous paddy** varieties, under threat of extinction.
- The **Biodiversity Rainfed Farming System**, promoted by Rural Organisation for Social Education, Tamil Nadu.
- It has revived the cultivation of 18 indigenous paddy varieties that are **disease and drought-resistant**.
- It focused on climate resilience, conservation of traditional paddy varieties, sustained productivity and food and nutrition security.

Centre clears first batch of flagship urban projects

- The Urban Development Ministry has cleared the first batch of projects under the AMRUT mission for 89 cities worth Rs.2,786 crore.
- The focus of the urban renewal projects would be on **establishing infrastructure** that could ensure adequate **water supply** and robust **sewerage networks**.
- The ministry has asked the States to **install water meters** at the homes of consumers.
- This is for the first time that the ministry approved **State level plans**, unlike the past practice of appraising and approving individual projects.

Why you should not join Civil Services

(IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS or like) in India?

by **Awdhesh Singh**, an IRS officer with the GOI. Ref: Quora

Most people join IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS or other civil services in India without knowing the full facts. **You already know why you should join civil services. Yet most of you may not be aware of the negative sides of the civil services, which you will realize soon after you join.** It is only fair that you should have the complete picture before you take a decision about your career.

1: No Recognition for Excellence

All civil servants get their promotions based on their seniority. Your destiny is fixed by your UPSC rank and what you do in next 30-38 years is hardly of any consequence as far as your career is concerned. Initially, when brilliant students join civil services, they work very hard to deliver results and change the system. However, soon they realize that there are several colleagues, who don't work even half and get all the (legal) benefits as them. They also realize that the more you work, the more chances of you committing a mistake and more chances of punishment. Hence gradually they too become slow and practical. I quote following lines which are quite popular among civil servants.

*Bane Raho Pagla, Kam
Karega Agla*

*Raho Hamesha Cool, Salary
Paoge Full*

*Mat Lo Tension, Nahi to
Family payegi Pension*

(English translation)

(Pretend to be fool, your successor shall do the work)

Always Remain Cool, You get full salary

Don't take tension, Else your family will get pension)

2: Corruption

It is a fact that many people are attracted towards civil services due to the tales of corruption. They know some officers or they have heard about some officers who have made millions. They join the civil services to make lot of money illegally thinking that it is easy to do so. When they join these services, they discover that no money is available for the post. They have to do some illegal activity or allow the illegal things to go on to make money. When you do any illegal act, there is always a risk of getting caught even after you have demitted the office. Your reputation is 100% spoiled even if you are not caught. Even when you have somehow made a lot of illegal money, you don't know how you use that money for you. You can't build any asset or buy new cars and live the life of luxury, because you may face vigilance action or face CBI or Income Tax raid at your house, which can spoil your career forever. You may even end up in jail. Every year, dozens of top civil servants are arrested and put behind the bar. Hence, you can't sleep properly once you have accumulated lots of ill-gotten money. You may also suffer many illnesses due to the mental tensions. Once you start doing illegal activities, you can never go back to your honest life because you will always be blackmailed by your superiors and juniors who know where you committed the illegal acts. Corruption is one way traffic, with no U-turn.

3: Frequent Transfers

People join civil services to occupy the prominent positions like DM, SP or Commissioners. They get all their recognition, perks and privileges (legal as well as illegal) only on these posts. However, they don't know how long they can continue in these postings. I was posted on election duty in Paudi (Garhwal) in 2007. Among the other election observers was a lady IAS officer, whose husband was also an IAS officer of the same batch. Presently both husband and wife were in central deputation in Delhi. She told me that in last 14-15 years, she and her husband were never posted

in the same station. They used to meet only when a meeting is called by the Commissioner or CM. Only when they came to Central Deputation, they are staying together. In Paudi I found that the DM and Commissioner were staying alone in their big-bungalows and their families were in Dehradun. Even SP and SDM were staying alone since their spouses were in IAS/IPS and they were posted in different stations. You must be ready to live alone, if you choose All India Services.

4: Frustration of Joining Central Services

I have already explained the problems of IAS and IPS. So you may be thinking that why not join IFS, IRS or other Central Services where you don't have these problems of transfer/posting. You are right. Central services provide you best family lives but they don't satisfy most people. Most people write civil services again and again to join IAS. I know a few people who got into IAS after 4-6 years of working in their other jobs as IPS, IRS etc. It is because, the type of recognition an IAS or IPS gets at such young age is unparalleled in other services. They get the big bungalows, red-light cars and uniformed guards which are not available to other services. But once you join IAS, IPS, you face different types of problems.

5: Political Interference

Who does not know about political interference in India, particularly in IAS and IPS? Most of these officers have to have political godfathers. The politicians use them to get their work done and the officers use them to get their postings and also protect them in case of any problems. Often you have to do illegal things to keep the bosses and politicians happy and thus you get trapped forever in their clutches. You can neither leave them nor live with them. There may not be much political interference in Central Services, but then they are also not helped by politicians when they need them.

6: Promotion or Demotion

While in other jobs, you gain importance as you get more and more experience. Unfortunately, it is just opposite in IAS, IPS. You are the most important person when you are SP or DM. Even the CM is directly in touch with you. This happens within just 3-5 years of your joining the cadre after training. However, as you get promoted to DIG, IG or Commissioner/Secretary, your importance declines. There are several dozen IG, ADG and even DG sitting in the state capital, and no one knows them. The IAS officers also become just a glorified babu when they become secretaries after promotion. Most people don't even know that such posts exist in their cadre. The situation is different in Central Services where your importance rises with every promotion. But then central service officer don't ever have that level of social adulation.

7: Poor Salaries

While the starting salaries of a civil servant are decent (around Rs 50,000), his growth of salary is just @ 3% per annum (plus the Dearness Allowance). The salary of the Chief Secretary is hardly Rs 1,80,000 pm (or Rs 1,35,000 after tax). The ratio of the peak salary to starting salary of an IAS officer is just four times. However, the story is quite different in corporate. For example, the Infosys CEO Vishal Sikka has been given an annual salary of USD5.08 million (over Rs. 30 crore) and USD2 million in stock options. Since the entry level salary of Infosys is around 3 lakhs per annum, the top man is paid more than 1000 times more salary than the entry level employee. In most of the corporate, the ratio is more than 100 times.

No honest civil servant can ever afford to buy a decent house in a good locality in any Metropolitan city. The low salaries were earlier compensated by the liberal pension given by the Government which used to be revised after every pay commission. However, once the pension benefit is stopped, you don't have a back-up support after your retirement.

8: Long and Hard Preparation

While most people think that they can get into their choice service in their first attempt, the reality is quite different. The average age of IAS and other service is around 27-28 years. This means that an average entrant of a CSE spend around 6-7 years after his graduation to get into civil services. Still only 1 in 500 is able to get into Civil Services and 1 in 5000 gets into IAS (proper). Even most people, who are in IAS, fail to get the cadre of choice and 25% end up in cadres which they hate to go.

9: Poor Family Life

While the family life of central service officers like IRS may be normal, the life of IAS and IPS are quite challenging in the initial years when you are heading a district. Most of the districts in India are quite backwards with hardly a decent school for your children. You are working 12 hours a day and hardly have any time for family. You also make so many enemies, if you an honest officer and you family is always fearing about your safety and of their own.

10: Diminishing Social Relevance

In the pre-liberalized era, government officers were looked as the Mai-Baap for a common citizen of India. Their salaries were comparable with private sectors but their perks were far superior. They were playing leading roles in social development. Today, most of the space is filled with private sectors. Our Honorable PM Shri Narendra Modi once said, “I believe government has no business to do business. The focus should be on Minimum Government but Maximum Governance.” Today a company like Infosys or TCS provides around 40000-50000 jobs each year while UPSC and PSC put together don't appoint as many people. The personal wealth of Mukesh Ambani is \$20.8 billion (Rs 137280 Crores) which is more than the total tax collection of several states in a year. The value of top 10 companies in India is more than the total revenue of the Government of India and all State Governments put together. The Tata group alone has market capitalization of Rs 7,00,000 crores. It is also a fact that most Indians don't like civil servants, who are perceived to be inefficient and corrupt. They are seen as hindrance to the growth of India rather than an instrument of growth.

PS : The purpose of this article is not to discourage to join Civil Services but to have the full picture of the civil services by highlighting the negative side of civil services which are hardly known to most of the entrants. 📌

Why you should join Civil Services

(IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS or like) in India?

by **Awdhesh Singh**, an IRS officer with the GOI. Ref: Quora

There are several benefits in the civil services, which you can't get in any other profession. It is upto you to focus your attention to the positive side of the civil services or at the negative side. There are still numerous reasons to join civil services in India despite all the liberalization and globalization. Let me narrate a few of those.

1: Prestige

“Reject bribes, hold your head high”

- U. Sagayam

Imagine that you are passing on a road of a city like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai or any major city of India and you see several vehicles passing by. There are expensive vehicles like Mercedes, BMW, or Jaguar and there is a Government vehicle of average type with red/blue light on its top with the name plate of the office/officer. Which vehicle people look at?

I am sure that most people look at the vehicle with red light. The traffic constables become alert on duty and may give a crisp salute to the officer sitting in the vehicle. A government vehicle is a sign of authority, which immediately attracts the attention of people. Similarly, a government officer immediately gets attention in big galaxies of important people.

Contrary to popular perception in urban India and media, the civil servants are highly respected by the people of India. It is because they serve people like no one else. Further, their selection process has always been transparent and fair. UPSC had always been above board for selection of candidates for top services. A PM/CM can make anyone a Cabinet Minister, Supreme Court Collegium can make anyone a High Court or Supreme Court Judge; and anyone can be made the CEO/CMD of a company but nobody can make you an IAS, IPS or IRS officer except your own merit. Hence, people of India never doubt the ability of a civil servant. When you become part of any function of an organization, its prestige goes up and you become the central point of the function and get all the attention.

2: Power

A civil servant is the epitome of state power. You are not a government servant but the government itself. The laws may be passed by the Parliament, but are executed only through civil servants. We as IRS officers sign so many documents on behalf of President of India. Please remember that you exercise the power of the Government in India pertaining to your department. You have the authority to decide cases worth hundreds of crores and conduct search, seizure of arrest of the people who are breaking the law of the land. No wonder, the law breakers don't want to mess with you and the law abiders look at you for taking on the law breakers. You have the original powers to implement the rule of law in this country. Only when you fail, others come into picture.

3. Job Security and Political Interference

If you are in a private sector job, you can be removed with one day notice. You are always at the mercy of the company and its top bosses. The service conditions of civil servants are determined by the Parliament and can't be changed to his disadvantage. Their service is protected by Article 311 of the Indian Constitution according to which, he can't be dismissed from service without an enquiry where he would be given opportunity to defend himself. He also has the option to approach the Courts, in case he has been treated unfairly. The promotion of a civil servant is not in the hands of politician, which is either time bound manner or based on seniority. The promotion committees are headed by UPSC Member/Chairman and hence you can expect utmost objectivity in promotion. You don't have to fear anyone, if you are on the right side of the law.

Fortunately the central services like IRS are fully insulated from political interference. I have never got any call from any politician in my 25 years of my career and there has been no political interference directly or indirectly ever. The reason can be attributed to the 'Transfer Policy' in our

department. The postings upto the rank of Additional Commissioner are made by the Chief Commissioner (Within his Zone/State) or by the Central Board of Excise and Customs (All over India) manned by all IRS officials. Even for Commissioner and Chief Commissioner, it is the Placement Committee (PC) headed by The Chairman CBEC or CBDT proposes the names for the approval of FM. If a name is not proposed by PC, no order can be made.

Similarly for posting in sensitive intelligence/investigation originations like DRI and DGCEI, the names have to be proposed by the Director General for being considered for posting. Thus the CBEC/CBDT has a sort of veto power over transfer and postings of IRS officers. If you find it unbelievable, please read the policy yourself by visiting the link Page on cbec.gov.in

Unfortunately the situation is not same in States and the IAS/IPS/IFOS officers are posted usually by CM directly. I was told by one of my IPS colleagues that in his State, an SP can't even transfer a constable without the approval of the Minister In-charge of the district. I hope that good sense will prevail and some day they will adopt the best practices of Government of India.

4: Decent Salaries and Excellent Perks

The salaries of the government officers have become very decent in recent years. When I joined IRS in 1991, my salary was around Rs 3500 pm only. Today in 2015 my salary is around Rs 1,50,000 pm viz. 43 times time more in less than 25 years. In addition, you also get free house, car, phone, medical, Leave Travel Concession, Children Education Allowance and pension. Most of the allowances are tax free. You require at least Rs 50 lakhs of CTC to enjoy the same lifestyle in corporate. Sometime, the rental value of your government accommodation itself may be much more than the CTC of several big corporate CEOs. Who can afford to stay in Lutyens Delhi bungalows on rent?

5: Work Life Balance

While it is common to hear the ply of the civil servants that they don't have a good personal life, it is not absolutely true. Every government department has different types of postings. Some posts (like DM, SP) require long hours of work while several posts are such where you have to find work. The salaries in both the cases are exactly the same.

Hence, if you give priority to personal life, you can always request the government to give you such assignments, where you can have more free time for yourself and the family. I have, on several occasion, requested the government for such peaceful assignments as I wanted to devote some time to teach my children and I was always given such light assignments. You also get 2/3 years of fully paid study leave, using which I did my PhD on E-Governance from IITM Gwalior while in service. You can choose to study abroad in top university of the world and the government may finance most of the expenses.

A female government officer gets additional 2 years of fully paid Child Care Leave to take care of their children, in addition to the maternity leave. Each government officer is also entitled to upto 5 years of Extra Ordinary Leave (Unpaid) for taking care of personals needs in addition to the 20 days of Half Pay Leave and 30 days of Earned leave every year besides 5 day a week work-schedule and numerous gazetted holidays. You have lots of flexibility to choose the postings according to your needs and temperament.

6: Job Satisfaction

You must remember that civil services is not an ordinary job where you work for an organization or for a person. You work for the country and its people. The revenue collected by an IRS officer is used for the benefit of the poorest and needy and for development of infrastructure and nation.

As a police officer,
you control crime in the
country and hence create
an atmosphere for security,
growth and prosperity.

As an IAS officer,
you make and implement the
developmental schemes for
the growth of the nation. Your
job is in the nature of social
service. Many billionaires like
Bill Gates, Azim Premji spend
billions from their own pocket
to get the satisfaction of doing
the social work. You have the
opportunity to do so while in
service and you are even paid
for it decently.

7: Freedom to Work

It may not be believable, but it is a fact that you have tremendous freedom to do your work as a government officer. Each post in a government (SP, DM or Commissioner) is created and empowered by Parliament. Hence as far as you are on that chair, you have the full freedom to decide the things according to your judgment and discretion.

For example, as a revenue officer, if I get information of tax evasion and I am empowered by law to conduct search, seizure or arrest; no one can give me any direction to act or not to act. No senior officer or Minister can change the decisions taken by the appropriate legal authority without following the procedures provided by the law. For example if the order of Commissioner is wrong, you have to approach the Tribunal, High Court or Supreme Court to reverse the order. These agencies have tremendous freedom and they decide the legality of the action independently without any intervention from the government.

Even though media mostly highlights the conflicts between politicians and civil servants, in reality they work with each other without much problem. It is because the goal of civil servants and politician is one and the same. Politicians need good IAS and IPS officers who can help the state grow and become free from crime. When there is a problem, often both sides are responsible. You don't even hear any conflict in states like MP, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Rajasthan and even in Bihar (in Nitish Kumar regime). Most of the states have no conflict at all between officers and politicians. Good politicians and good bureaucrats always work together harmoniously and help each other. The problem between them is more personal than professional, though it is always highlighted as professional problem and politicians are blamed for the mess.

8: Diversity of Jobs

The civil services provide tremendous diversity of jobs. If you are in IAS, you can virtually head any organization in India. As secretary, you can head different ministries of the government and also different public sector undertaking, educational and research institutions.

As an IRS (C&CE) officer you work in Customs, Excise, Service Tax, Narcotics, Training, Systems etc. You even work as advocate, when you are posted in Tribunals. You also work in intelligence agencies like DRI, DGCEI, CEIB, IB or RAW. All officers may get posting in Ministries and State/Central Government and work in the policy formation.

You can get posted to international organizations like WCO, UN, WHO, World Bank IMF etc. You can take lien and become a professor or join an NGO or even start an NGO in public interest. You can write books, make films and do several other activities with the permission of government.

9: Widest Networking

The networks of civil servants are the widest in the country. As an IRS officer, my colleagues are posted all over the country. We also have officers posted in several part of the world. I can call anyone and request them for any help or protocol. When you join a service, you join a family. You are like the new born baby, who is looked after by every elder of the family. You have to just request and your wishes may be fulfilled. As you grow older in service, your role is reversed and you take care of the young officers like your children.

There is also a brotherhood between all officers. I just have to pick up the phone and request my colleagues in IAS, IPS or others, and they will usually extend all types of help. Through your friends, you can approach anyone in the country, in case you need their help. The businessman, actors, leaders are all interested in networking with you, because you are always in positive to help others. It is you who have to restrict your network due to time constraints and due to its effect on performing your job professionally and impartially. Even when you retire, the network is not broken since your juniors remain in the service till almost the end of your life.

10: Post Retirement Jobs


A civil servant get the experience of the government as no one else can. It is often said in movies that an IAS (or IPS, IRS) officer can always choose to become a Minister but a Minister can't become a civil servant. There is a great demand of such experience in the corporate, who have to deal several government departments, but they have no experience of dealing them. The retiree officers usually get very good job offers by corporate, if they choose to work later. Many of my colleagues, who have left IRS after 10-15 years of service to join corporate are getting salaries in Crores. You can even start your own consultancy firm and earn good money. Since you learn how to run the government, you can also choose to join politics and become an effective Minister or even Chief Minister (Arvind Kejriwal, Ajit Jogi) or Prime Minister (Morarji Desai). You can also become Governor, CIG, CVC, CEC or UPSC/CAT/Tax Tribunal Member/Chairman after retirement.

Conclusion

It may be a good idea to join civil services like IAS, IPS, IRS, or like, if you appreciate the value of the good things that government services have to offer. However, there is no free lunch in this world. Hence there is a price to be paid for getting the good things.

Remember the old Hindi Song
“Kabhi kisi ko mukammal
jahan nahi milta, Kabhi zamin
to kabhi asman nahi milta”

(No body gets a perfect world, sometime you don't get the earth and sometime you don't get the sky).

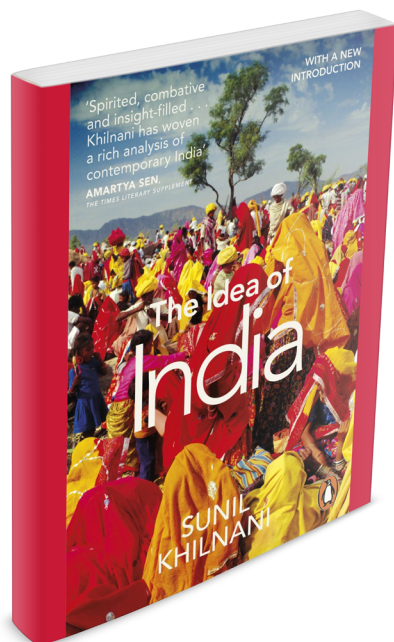
If you are willing to pay the price, civil services is still one of the best options to join in India. 

How much do you score on this list of 5 must read books on Indian History?

Preparing for Civil Services gives you the best time to catch up on your nation's history, unless you are the one who snoozes through the subject and wakes up in the last minute to ratofy Spectrum books!

But traditional books tend to become a boring read after a while! Add to that, the oft recommended best sellers – *Discovery of India*, *Freedom at Midnight*, *Argumentative Indian* and likes become a tad too traditional for our senses, neh?

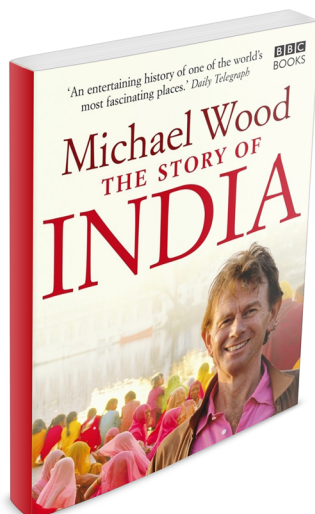
Hence, to keep things spicy, go through this article and let us know – **How much do you score on this list of 5 must read books on Indian History?**



#1. The Idea of India by Sunil Khilnani

This long essay makes an eloquent and persuasive argument for Nehru's idea of nationhood in India. At a time when the relevance of Nehru's vision is under scrutiny, this book assumes a special significance.

The book doesn't directly answer the critical question: What is the idea of India? However, **it lays bare certain dimensions of the idea** that enables the reader to have a reasonably good idea of the idea. A well researched book on what could be the idea of India. Given the complex matrix of Indian history and the present day existence, it is indeed difficult to articulate in black and white such an idea but one can comprehend and perhaps appreciate it as one walks through the pages of the book.

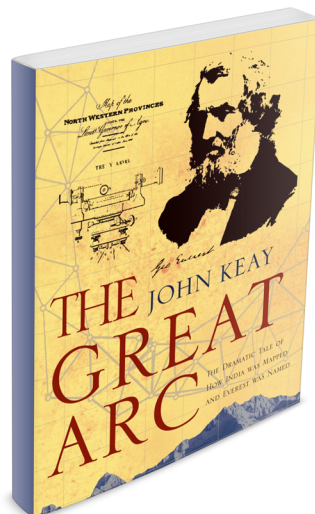


#2. The Story of India by Michael Wood

Michael sets out on an epic journey across this vibrant country to trace the roots of India's present in the incredible riches of her past. The Story of India is a magical mixture of history and travelogue, and an unforgettable portrait of India – past, present and future.

Why should you read it?

It reinforces some otherwise mundane facts with beautiful anecdotes! You will read a lot about Kanishka and the southern empires in this compelling narrative. In case you haven't watched the BBC produced documentary, do give it a shot!



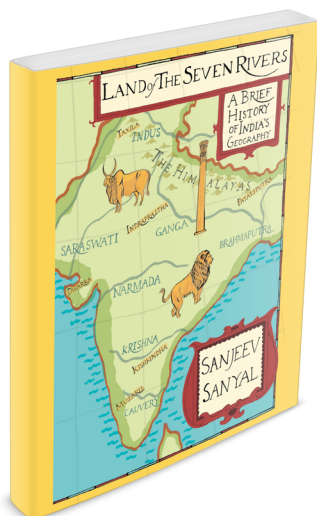
#3. The Great Arc by John Keay

The Great Arc is a wonderful little chronicle of the "Great Trigonometrical Survey" carried out in India roughly between 1800-1860 CE. Various teams surveyed India right from its southern tip, to the Himalayas.

Do you know the importance of that work?

The Great Arc made possible the mapping of the entire Indian sub-continent and the development of its roads, railways and telegraphs. India as we now know it was defined in the process.

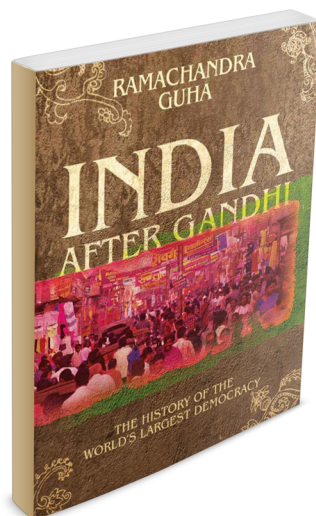
It's a thin book and is amazingly well chronicled and you would thank us for referring this to you!



#4. Land of the Seven Rivers by Sanjeev Sanyal

Did the Great Flood of Indian legend actually happen? Why did the Buddha walk to Sarnath to give his first sermon? How did the Europeans map India?

The history of any country begins with its geography. So grab this book as soon as you can!




#5. India After Gandhi by Dr. Ramachandra Guha

We are sure you already know about this one. Why doubt an aspirant's wisdom and knowledge when he has already spent countless hours wondering whether to read post independence from India After Gandhi or fall back on Bipan Chandra!

However, we did come by an interesting review of this book and we would do well to produce a befitting quote to suit the magisterial work that this is.

If you do not know where you come from, then you don't know where you are, and if you don't know where you are, then you don't know where you're going. And if you don't know where you're going, you're probably going wrong.

— Terry Pratchett

So, that was it from our side! If you have some free time, catch up on these books. Let us know some of your favorites and of course, do let us know your score! 

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