

02 JULY 2024

TOPICS COVERED

1. Medha Patkar gets jail term for 'defaming' Delhi L-G (GS Paper II: Freedom of speech)
2. Centre delays fixing boundaries to hold Census (GS Paper I: Demography)
3. Shiv Sena (UBT) retains two seats, BJP wins one in Maharashtra Council (GS Paper II: State Legislature)
4. Kozhikode secures 'City of Literature' status at annual UCCN conference held in Portugal (PCS)
5. Project-75I (GS Paper III: Internal Security)
6. Why are scientists looking for the Higgs boson's best friend? (GS Paper III" S&T)
7. Chinese rocket engine goes Awol during hot testing (GS Paper III: S&T)
8. Amid doubt and fear, new criminal laws take over an unready system (GS Paper II: Justice System)
9. Iran's theocratic state is unlikely to give space to a popular reformist (GS Paper II: Iran)
10. At the end of Pride Month, assessing the LGBTQIA+ communities' rights (GS Paper I: Society)
11. What is on the agenda for the 16th Finance Commission? (GS Paper II: Constitutional Body) (GS Paper III: Taxation)
12. PMI signals manufacturing rebound (GS Paper III)

Article 171: Composition of Legislative Councils

- The strength of the Legislative Council can be up to **one-third** of the strength of the State Legislative Assembly.
- The strength **must not be lower than 40**.
- One-Third of members shall be elected by electorates consisting of members of Municipalities, District Boards, and other local bodies as specified by Parliament.
- One-Twelfth members shall be elected by electorates consisting of Graduates for at least three years of any university in India, or similar qualifications as specified by Parliament.
- One-Twelfth members shall be elected by electorates consisting of teachers teaching for at least three years in educational institutions of level secondary school and above, or as specified by Parliament.
- One-third of members shall be elected by members of State Legislative Assemblies.
- The remaining one-sixth members shall be nominated by Governor. They must have special knowledge or experience in Literature, Arts, Science, Social Science and Cooperative Movement (Cooperative movement is not mentioned for Rajya Sabha).

PatrioticMS

Field evaluation trials of submarine bids under Project-75I complete

GS Paper III:
Internal Security

NEW DELHI

The Navy's mega-submarine deal under Project-75I, estimated at over ₹43,000 crore, has crossed a major milestone in the process with the field evaluation trials (FET) – to check the compliance of the bids received – now complete.

There are two contenders in the fray: Germany's Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) and Navantia of Spain.

While an Indian Navy team visited the TKMS shipyard in March for FET, the evaluation of Navantia's offer was conducted last week, officials confirmed.

The evaluation report will now be compiled and presented to the Defence Ministry, which will declare the technical complaint bids which is expected to take about two months, a defence official explained.

Diplomatic sources said that Navantia would be de-



Moving forward: Navantia of Spain has offered a vessel based on its new S80 class of submarines. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

monstrating the Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system fitted in a submarine operating on the surface and not submerged and that the submerged performance would be demonstrated in due course.

The design offered by TKMS, which has partnered with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), is based on its highly successful Class 214 submarine as well as Class 212CD. Navantia, which has tied up with Larsen & Toubro, has offered a vessel based on its new S80 class

of submarines, the first of which was launched in 2021 and was commissioned into the Spanish Navy as S-81 'Isaac Peral' in November 2023.

The Request For Proposal (RFP) issued by the Navy, detailing the specifications required, states that the first submarine should have indigenous content (IC) of 45% which should go up to 60% for the sixth and last submarine.

The key determinant, however, to qualify for P-75I is the AIP system which enhances the endu-

rance of a submarine.

In the backdrop of a decision on the deal, the top leaders of Germany and Spain are scheduled to visit India in the next few months during which they are expected to make a pitch for an inter-governmental agreement.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is scheduled to visit India in the second half of October for inter-governmental consultations. Spain's President Pedro Sanchez is also expected to visit in the next few months.

Only Germany and Spain submitted bids for the deal. The deal is being progressed under the Strategic Partnership model of the defence acquisition procedure and L&T and MDL are the two Indian shipyards shortlisted to partner with foreign submarine manufacturers to produce six advanced conventional submarines in India under technology transfer.

Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) systems are propulsion technologies used in submarines that allow them to operate without access to atmospheric oxygen, thereby extending their submerged endurance and operational capabilities.

Why are scientists looking for the Higgs boson's best friend?

The top quark is the universe's heaviest elementary particle. Each one weighs three-times as much as a copper atom. Its high mass implies that of all elementary particles, it interacts most strongly with the Higgs boson particle – and this makes physicists wonder whether our universe is unstable

GS Paper III S&T

Vasudevan Mukunth

Scientists at the world's largest physics experiment have reported the most precise measurement yet of the most massive subatomic particle we know. The finding sounds esoteric but it wouldn't be an understatement to say it has implications for the whole universe.

The Greek philosopher Empedocles surmised 2,400 years ago that matter could be broken up into smaller and smaller pieces until we're left with air, earth, fire, and water. Since the early 20th century, physicists have broken up matter into smaller and smaller pieces to find many different subatomic particles instead – as many as to fill a zoo.

The top quark

Rather than a 'smaller' particle, contemporary particle physicists are concerned with elusive particles.

More energetic particles often break down into ones with less energy. The greater the difference in energy between that of a particle and the products of its decay, the less time the particle exists in its original form and more quickly it breaks down. By the mass-energy equivalence, a more massive particle is also a more energetic particle. And the most massive particle scientists have found to date is the top quark.

It is 10-times heavier than a water molecule, about three-times as much as a copper atom, and 95% as much as a full caffeine molecule.

As a result, the top quark is so unstable that it could break up into lighter, more stable particles in less than 10^{-25} seconds.

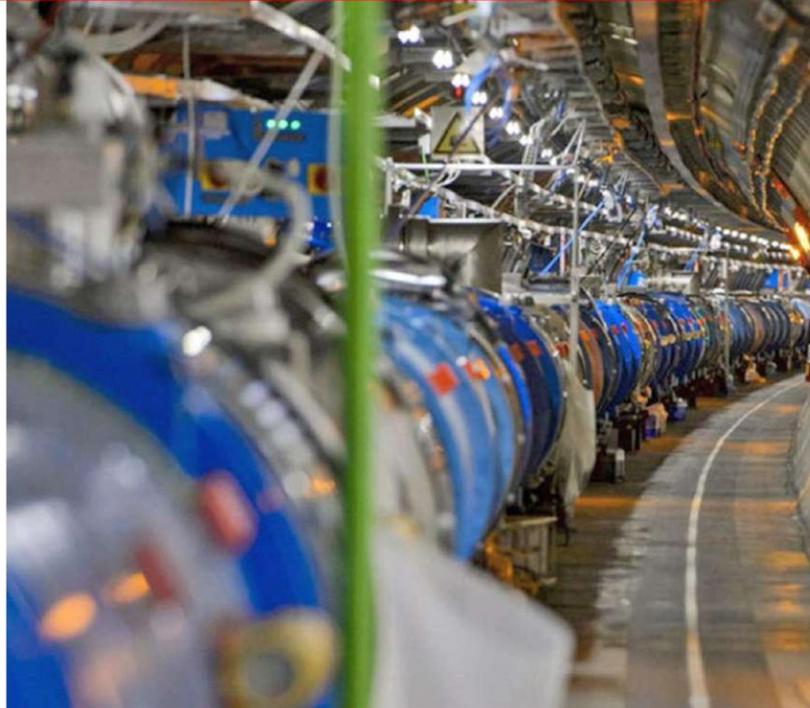
The top quark's mass is very important in physics. A particle's mass is equal to the sum of masses contributed from multiple sources. An important source for all elementary particles is the Higgs field, which pervades the entire universe. A "field" is like a sea of energy and excitations in the field are called particles. This way, for example, an excitation of the Higgs field is called the Higgs boson just as an electron can be considered to be an excitation of an 'electron field'.

All these fields engage with each other in specific ways. When the 'electron field' interacts with the Higgs field at energies much less than 100 GeV, for example, the electron particle will acquire some mass. The same thing goes for other elementary particles. (GeV, or giga-electron-volt, is a unit of energy used in the context of subatomic particles: 1 joule = 6.24 billion GeV.)

If the top quark is the most massive subatomic particle, it is because Higgs bosons interact most strongly with it. By measuring the top quark's mass as precisely as possible, then, physicists can learn a lot about the Higgs boson as well.

"Physicists are intrigued by the top quark mass as there is something peculiar about it," Nirmal Raj, particle theorist and assistant professor at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, told *The Hindu*. "On the one hand, it is the one closest to the Higgs boson's mass, which is what one would 'naturally' expect before measuring it. On the other, all other [particles like it] are much, much lighter, making one wonder if the top quark is actually an oddball, not a 'natural' species."

The top quark, sometimes also referred to as the truth quark, (symbol: t) is the most massive of all observed elementary particles. It derives its mass from its coupling to the Higgs boson.



A tunnel inside the Large Hadron Collider during maintenance work. AFP

The universe as we know it

But the rabbit hole goes deeper.

Physicists are keen to study the Higgs boson also because of its own mass, which it acquires by interacting with other Higgs bosons. Importantly, the Higgs boson is more massive than expected – which is to say the Higgs field is more energy-laden than expected. And because it pervades the universe, the universe can be said to be more energetic than expected. This 'expectation' comes from calculations physicists have performed and they don't have reason to believe they are wrong. Why does the Higgs field have so much energy?

Physicists also have a theory as to how the Higgs field originally formed (at the birth of the universe). If they are right, there is a small yet non-zero chance that one day in future, the field could go through a sort of self-adjustment that reduces its energy and modifies the universe in drastic ways.

They know the field has some potential energy today and there is a way it could shed some of it to have less and become more stable. There are two ways to get to this stable state. One is for the field to gain some energy first before losing it and more, like climbing one side of a mountain to get into a deeper valley on the other side. The other is if an event called quantum tunnelling happens, whereby the field's potential energy would 'tunnel' through the mountain instead of having to climb over it and



The Greek philosopher Empedocles surmised 2,400 years ago that matter could be broken up into smaller and smaller pieces until we're left with air, earth, fire, and water

drop into the valley yonder.

This is why Stephen Hawking said in 2016 the Higgs boson could spell the "end of the universe" as we know it. Even if the Higgs field is slightly stronger than it is now, the atoms of most chemical elements will be destroyed, taking stars, galaxies, and earthlife with them. But while Hawking was technically correct, other physicists quickly said the frequency of the tunnelling event was 1 in 10^{100} years.

The Higgs boson's mass – 126 GeV/c² (a unit used for subatomic particles) – is also just about enough to keep the universe in its current state; anything else and the "end" would happen. Such a finely tuned value is obviously curious and physicists would like to know which natural processes contribute to it. The top quark is part of this picture by virtue of being the most massive particle, in a sense the Higgs boson's closest friend.

"Measuring the top quark mass precisely has implications for whether our universe will tunnel out of existence," Dr. Raj said.

Finding the top quark

Physicists discovered the top quark in 1995 at a particle accelerator in the US called the Tevatron, measuring its mass to be 151-197 GeV/c². The Tevatron was shut down in 2011; physicists continued to analyse data it had collected and updated the value three years later to 174.98 GeV/c². Other experiments and research groups yielded more precise values over time. On June 27, physicists at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Europe reported the most precise figure yet: 172.52 GeV/c².

Measuring a top quark's mass is difficult when its lifetime is around 10^{-25} seconds. Typically, a particle-smasher will produce an ultra-hot soup of particles. If a top quark is present in this soup, it will quickly decay into specific groups of lighter particles. Detectors look out for these events, and when they happen track and record their properties. Finally, computers collect this data and physicists analyse them to reconstruct the physical properties of the top quark.

Now researchers will incorporate the top quark's mass measurement into calculations that inform our understanding of our universe's particles. Some of them will use it to also quest for an even more precise value. According to Dr. Raj, precisely measuring the top quark's mass is also key to knowing whether some other particle with mass close to that of the top quark could be hiding in the data.

Chinese rocket engine goes Awol during hot testing

GS Paper III: S&T

Reuters

Beijing Tianbing Technology Co. said on Sunday that the first stage of its Tianlong-3 rocket under development had detached from its launch pad during a test due to a structural failure and landed in a hilly area of the city of Gongyi in central China.

There were no reports of casualties after an initial investigation, Beijing Tianbing, also known as Space Pioneer, said in a statement on its official WeChat account.

Parts of the rocket stage were scattered within a "safe area" but caused a local fire, according to a separate statement by the Gongyi emergency management bureau.

The fire has since been extinguished and no one has been hurt, the bureau said.

The two-stage Tianlong-3 (the name is Mandarin for "Sky Dragon") is a partly reusable rocket under development by Space Pioneer, one of a small group of private-sector rocket makers that have grown rapidly over the past five years.

Falling rocket debris in China after launches is not unheard of, but it is very rare anywhere in the world for part of a rocket under development to make an unplanned flight out of its test site and

The two-stage Tianlong-3 is a partly reusable rocket under development by Space Pioneer, one of a small group of private-sector rocket makers that have seen rapid growth recently

crash.

According to Space Pioneer, the first stage of the Tianlong-3 ignited normally during a hot test but later detached from the test bench due to structural failure and landed in hilly areas 1.5 km away.

A hot test is one in which fuel is flowed into the rocket motor being tested and it is allowed to fire in conditions mimicking those during lift-off.

A rocket can consist of several stages, with the first, or lowest, stage igniting and propelling the rocket upwards upon its launch.

When the fuel is exhausted, the first stage falls off, and the second stage ignites, keeping the rocket in propulsion. Some rockets have third stages. India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has four stages.

Israel is facing a strategic defeat in Gaza (02 July)

The Palestine question is back in West Asia's geopolitics, with an emphasis on the two-state solution, marking a defeat for Israel

- On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel, killing at least 1,200 people.
- In response, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared a war on Gaza to "crush" Hamas.
- Israel's leaders have stated that their main objective is to "eliminate" Hamas.
- Gaza, located between Israel and the Mediterranean Sea, has been under an Israeli blockade since 2007.
- After the October 7 attack, Israel imposed a total siege on Gaza and launched heavy air strikes followed by a full-scale invasion.
- The war has devastated Gaza, displacing almost the entire pre-war population of 2.3 million.
- More than 37,000 people (about 1.7% of Gaza's population) have been killed, and over 86,000 people (about 3.7% of the population) have been wounded.
- On June 19, after 256 days of fighting, IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari stated that Hamas cannot be eliminated as it is an idea and a party rooted in the hearts of the people.

Lack of victory

- Israel wanted a quick and decisive victory against Hamas.
- Israel aimed to destroy Hamas's governing structures, defeat its brigades, destroy tunnel networks, kill its top leaders, free over 240 hostages, and strengthen its deterrence.
- After more than eight months of fighting, even the IDF questions the achievability of these objectives.
- Hezbollah, a powerful Shia militia from Lebanon, launched controlled attacks from southern Lebanon to Israel's Upper Galilee region.
- Hezbollah's attacks have displaced around 60,000 Israelis.
- Israel has conducted strikes in Lebanon targeting Hezbollah but has not launched a full-scale war.
- Controlled aggression does not deter Hezbollah, and the displaced Israelis cannot return home without a ceasefire.
- Hezbollah demands a ceasefire in Gaza before ceasing its attacks.
- Invading Lebanon is an option, but it is risky as the last war in 2006 did not end well for Israel.
- Fighting Hezbollah, deeply integrated into Lebanon's state and society, would be more dangerous and difficult than the conflict with Hamas.

The Iran challenge

- Israel's second problem is Iran.
- Israel adopted a two-pronged approach: attack Gaza and target Hamas's allies.
- Israel carried out air strikes on Iranian military officers in Syria.
- Israel miscalculated Iran's response when it attacked the Iranian embassy in Damascus.
- Iran retaliated with a barrage of missiles and drones.
- This weakened Israel's deterrence against non-state actors.
- Iran is expanding its nuclear programme, increasing enriched uranium production at Fordow and Natanz.
- Israel views Iran's nuclear programme as its top security threat.
- Israel is currently stuck in conflicts with Gaza and Hezbollah.
- Israel has not attacked Iranian officers in other countries since Iran's retaliation.
- Israel and the US do not want a war with Iran, giving Iran an opportunity to accelerate its nuclear programme.
- Israel's Arab normalization efforts are stalled.
- Saudi Arabia demands a Palestinian state for peace with Israel.
- Israel faces global isolation for its conduct in the war.
- Two UN resolutions for a Gaza ceasefire were ignored by Israel.
- There is a genocide case against Israel at the ICJ.
- The ICC prosecutor seeks arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders.
- Student protests in the West pressure governments to act against Israel.
- U.S. support for Israel faces rising dissent in Washington.

The Palestine question

- Israel aimed to keep the Palestine occupation a non-issue globally.
- The 2020 Abraham Accords suggested Arab countries prioritized engagement over the Palestine issue.
- Hamas's October 7 attack and the Gaza war have revived the Palestine issue in West Asia.
- The two-state solution has gained renewed focus.
- Ireland, Norway, and Spain recognized Palestine in May 2024, with more countries likely to follow.
- This shift is a setback to Israel's policy of marginalizing the Palestine question.
- The Gaza war is unresolved, and tensions with Hezbollah are rising.
- Iran has halted Israel's attacks on its officers and is expanding its nuclear program.
- Houthis are engaging the U.S. in the Red Sea.
- Israel faces global criticism for the war, and the Palestine issue is prominent again.
- Netanyahu's aim for strategic dominance has resulted in a more hostile environment.

- Israel's dilemma is that prolonged war without clear objectives worsens the strategic situation.
- Israel needs a comprehensive review of its strategies.
- If Netanyahu cannot manage this, Israelis should consider new leadership.

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Sense of uncertainty

Amid doubt and fear, new criminal laws take over an unready system

The three new criminal laws have come into force in the country, amidst widespread fears that the policing and judicial systems are not yet ready for their introduction. Barring reports of some rudimentary training to station-house police personnel, some workshops here and there, and an upgrade to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems, which will help ease the filing of complaints in electronic form, the exact level of preparedness among the upper and lower echelons of the police is unknown. Earlier the government had appointed July 1 as the day on which the three laws – the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in place of the Indian Penal Code, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita to supersede the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, which has replaced the Indian Evidence Act – will come into force. It appears that the Union government decided that it is better to implement them and let the police, courts and lawyers fumble their way towards a rough transition than await a time when everyone involved in the administration of criminal law is brought up to speed. How much the initial period of possible confusion will last is anybody's guess. There is little doubt that more time ought to have been given to the police and legal fraternity to prepare themselves before the codes were brought into force.

The very names of the new laws appear obscure, with many questioning why there is no English equivalent for the new codes, and why they should bear unfamiliar Hindi names. There was no change in the name of the criminal procedure code when the 1898 original was replaced with a new one in 1973. There is also a persistent feeling that the laws were not fully debated in the legislature – even though a Standing Committee of Parliament went into the draft and recommended some changes – or widely discussed with civil society. There is a looming fear that some of the new provisions, especially the one relating to police custody that can be availed of in multiple tranches, will sharply empower the police to the citizen's disadvantage. The inclusion of 'terrorism' as an offence in ordinary penal law in addition to the present special anti-terrorism law is bound to cause confusion. The Centre's announcement that States are free to make their own amendments is fine, but there is no assurance that such amendments will get early Presidential assent. Some procedural reforms such as registering FIRs regardless of jurisdiction and introduction of videography of searches and seizures are welcome initiatives, but there is a palpable sense of uncertainty over the overall impact of these new laws.

Sense of uncertainty: On the new criminal laws, state of preparedness (02 July)

Amid doubt and fear, new criminal laws take over an unready system

- Three new criminal laws have come into force in the country.
- There are concerns that the policing and judicial systems are not ready for their implementation.
- Training and preparedness among police personnel are reportedly minimal.
- The government set July 1 as the start date for these laws.
- The new laws are:
 - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (replacing the Indian Penal Code)
 - Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (superseding the Code of Criminal Procedure)
 - Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (replacing the Indian Evidence Act)
- The Union government opted to implement the laws despite the lack of complete readiness.
- The duration of the initial period of confusion is uncertain.
- More time should have been given for preparation before enforcing the new laws.
- The new laws have obscure names, leading to questions about the lack of English equivalents and the use of unfamiliar Hindi names.
- There was no name change for the criminal procedure code when updated in 1973.
- Concerns exist that the laws were not fully debated in the legislature or widely discussed with civil society.
- There are fears that new provisions, like multiple tranches of police custody, will empower the police at the citizen's disadvantage.
- Including 'terrorism' as an offence in ordinary penal law may cause confusion.
- The Centre allows states to make amendments, but there is no guarantee of early Presidential assent.
- Some procedural reforms, such as registering FIRs regardless of jurisdiction and videography of searches and seizures, are positive.
- Overall, there is uncertainty about the impact of these new laws.

The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)

The primary objective of CCTNS is to facilitate the collection, storage, retrieval, analysis, transfer, and sharing of data and information at the police station and between the police station and other organizations, including police stations, district and state police headquarters, courts, and prisons.

Components:

- **National Database:** A central repository of crime and criminal data that can be accessed by law enforcement agencies across the country.
- **State Database:** Databases maintained at the state level, integrated with the national database.
- **Police Station Systems:** Digital systems implemented at police stations to record and track crime and criminal data.

02 July 2024

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

GS Paper II: Justice System

Question: Evaluate the preparedness of the Indian policing and judicial systems for the implementation of the new criminal laws. What steps should be taken to ensure a smooth transition? (250 Words/15 Marks)

Question: Critically analyze the potential challenges and pitfalls that may arise during the implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam. How can these challenges be mitigated? (250 Words/15 Marks)

प्रश्न: नए आपराधिक कानूनों के कार्यान्वयन के लिए भारतीय पुलिस और न्यायिक प्रणालियों की तैयारियों का मूल्यांकन करें। सुचारू संक्रमण सुनिश्चित करने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए जाने चाहिए? (250 शब्द/15 अंक)

प्रश्न: भारतीय न्याय संहिता, भारतीय नागरिक सुरक्षा संहिता और भारतीय साक्ष्य अधिनियम के कार्यान्वयन के दौरान उत्पन्न होने वाली संभावित चुनौतियों और कमियों का आलोचनात्मक विश्लेषण करें। इन चुनौतियों को कैसे कम किया जा सकता है? (250 शब्द/15 अंक)

ANSWER APPROACH

- Introduce your answer with a brief overview of the new criminal laws (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam).
- Then bring analysis of current preparedness such as Training and Workshops, Technological Upgrades, and Uncertainty and Gaps.
- In the last conclude with a call for proactive measures to ensure a smooth transition and uphold the rule of law.

ANSWER

The introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam marks a significant overhaul of India's criminal justice system, replacing the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Indian Evidence Act, respectively. However, several challenges and pitfalls are anticipated during their implementation, as highlighted by recent reports and expert opinions.

Challenges and Pitfalls

- **Lack of Preparedness:** The article underscores widespread concerns regarding the preparedness of the policing and judicial systems. Apart from some rudimentary training sessions and workshops,

there appears to be no comprehensive plan to equip police personnel at all levels with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement these new laws effectively. This gap could lead to confusion and inefficiency in law enforcement.

- **Insufficient Training:** The transition to new legal frameworks necessitates extensive training for police, legal professionals, and judicial officers. The current efforts, which include basic training and limited workshops, seem inadequate. Without robust training programs, the new laws may be misinterpreted or improperly applied, undermining their intended benefits.
- **Language and Accessibility Issues:** The new laws are named in Hindi, which has sparked concerns about accessibility and inclusivity. The absence of English equivalents could pose comprehension challenges for non-Hindi speakers, potentially alienating a significant portion of the legal fraternity and the public, and leading to inconsistencies in application across different regions.
- **Debate and Consultation:** There is a persistent feeling that these laws were not sufficiently debated in the legislature or discussed with civil society. Effective lawmaking requires broad-based consultations to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered. The perceived lack of thorough debate may result in provisions that are not fully aligned with societal needs or that inadvertently create new issues.
- **Enhanced Police Powers:** The provision **allowing police custody in multiple tranches** is particularly contentious. It raises fears of increased police power, potentially to the detriment of citizens' rights. This could lead to misuse of authority and violations of due process, eroding public trust in the criminal justice system.
- **Inclusion of Terrorism in Penal Law:** Incorporating **'terrorism' as an offense in ordinary penal law**, in addition to existing special anti-terrorism laws, may create legal ambiguities and enforcement challenges. This dual approach could lead to overlaps, conflicts, and confusion among law enforcement agencies.
- **State Amendments and Presidential Assent:** While states have the freedom to amend these laws, there is no guarantee of prompt Presidential assent.

Mitigation Strategies

- **Comprehensive Training Programs:** Implement extensive training programs for police, legal professionals, and judicial officers, including practical workshops and continuous education, to ensure they are well-versed in the new laws and their application.
- **Multilingual Versions:** Provide official translations of the laws in English and other regional languages to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. This would facilitate better understanding and uniform application across the country.
- **Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage in broader consultations with legal experts, civil society organizations, and the public to gather feedback and make necessary amendments. This participatory approach can help address potential issues and enhance the effectiveness of the laws.
- **Safeguards Against Misuse:** Introduce stringent safeguards and oversight mechanisms to prevent the misuse of enhanced police powers. This could include judicial oversight of police custody and regular audits to ensure compliance with legal standards.
- **Clear Guidelines on Terrorism Provisions:** Develop clear guidelines and protocols for the application of terrorism-related provisions to avoid overlaps and conflicts with existing anti-terrorism laws. This clarity will aid law enforcement agencies in their duties.

- **Expedited Process for State Amendments:** Establish a streamlined process for states to obtain Presidential assent for amendments, ensuring that regional adaptations do not lead to prolonged delays or inconsistencies.

Thus, while the new criminal laws have the potential to modernize and improve India's criminal justice system, their successful implementation hinges on addressing the identified challenges through comprehensive training, inclusive language policies, stakeholder engagement, and robust safeguards against misuse.

PatrioticIAS

Waiting for a reformist

Iran's theocratic state is unlikely to give space to a popular reformist

As no candidate managed to win 50% vote in the first round of Iran's snap presidential elections, the country is headed for a run-off on July 5 between the top two vote getters – reformist Masoud Pezeshkian and conservative Saeed Jalili. Mr. Pezeshkian, a surgeon and lawmaker who was the Minister of Health in the government of reformist President Mohammed Khatami, won 42.5% votes, while Mr. Jalili, Iran's former chief nuclear negotiator, got 38.8% votes. Conservative Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf finished third with 13.8% vote share. The election, which was necessitated by President Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash in May, is taking place at a crucial time for Iran. There is much public anger amid economic hardships and heightened cultural policing. Iran is facing pressure to rein in its proxies, mainly Yemen's Houthis and Lebanon's Hezbollah, particularly after the Israel-Hamas war began. Iran is also expanding its nuclear programme, defying international pressure, and tensions with Israel rocketed in April when Tehran launched a missile attack towards the Jewish state after its embassy building in Damascus was bombed. A new President, reformist or conservative, is unlikely to change core policies, but the highest elected official in the republic can have a say on how critical policies are being implemented.

In the past, reformist politicians such as Mr. Khatami and Hassan Rouhani won huge mandates on promises of change, but did little in opening up the system that is tightly controlled by the Shia clergy. The failure to reform the system from within and alleviate the economic woes, which are a result of the western sanctions, have turned sections of the electorate apathetic. There was a time when Iran's clerical rulers would invoke the high participation of voters as a measure of popular legitimacy for the revolutionary regime, which is partly representative and fully theocratic. If the voter turnout was above 80% in 2009, it was a record low this year – 39.9%. This is not a surprise. All branches of the state are under conservative control, and several reformist politicians were barred from contesting. Even if reformists win, they are constrained by unelected institutions such as the office of the Supreme Leader and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The near-total dominance of the conservatives over the institutions and the clergy's refusal to change are hollowing out even the limited democracy that the revolution had promised. Economic hardships and repression over the Islamic code are adding fuel to the fire. Iran can take pride that it held a presidential election amidst crises. But its rulers should also take a cue from the growing dissent and falling voter interest, and be ready for political and social reforms.

Waiting for the reformist: On the Iran election (02 July)

Iran's theocratic state is unlikely to give space to a popular reformist

- No candidate won 50% of the vote in Iran's snap presidential election, leading to a run-off on July 5.
- The run-off will be between reformist Masoud Pezeshkian (42.5% votes) and conservative Saeed Jalili (38.8% votes).
- Conservative Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf finished third with 13.8% vote share.
- The election was necessitated by President Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash in May.
- Iran is experiencing public anger due to economic hardships and heightened cultural policing.
- Iran faces pressure to control proxies like Yemen's Houthis and Lebanon's Hezbollah, especially after the Israel-Hamas war.
- Iran is expanding its nuclear programme, defying international pressure.
- Tensions with Israel increased after Iran launched a missile attack in April.
- The new President is unlikely to change core policies but will influence how they are implemented.
- Reformist politicians like Khatami and Rouhani won on promises of change but failed to open up the tightly controlled system.
- Economic woes from Western sanctions have made voters apathetic.
- Voter turnout was 39.9% this year, a record low compared to 80% in 2009.
- All branches of the state are under conservative control, with many reformist politicians barred from contesting.
- Even if reformists win, they are constrained by unelected institutions like the Supreme Leader and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
- Conservative dominance and the clergy's refusal to change are undermining Iran's limited democracy.
- Economic hardships and repression over the Islamic code are increasing dissent.
- Iran held an election amidst crises, but its rulers should heed the growing dissent and consider political and social reforms.

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

- Iran is a crucial member of the INSTC, which is a multi-modal transportation network connecting India, Iran, Russia, and several Central Asian countries.
- The main participants in the INSTC include India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Oman. Other countries in the region are also involved in various capacities.
- The corridor aims to shorten the transportation time for goods traveling between South Asia, Iran, and Europe by bypassing traditional routes through the Suez Canal.

Chabahar Port Development:

- Located in southeastern Iran, Chabahar Port is being developed in collaboration with India and Afghanistan.
- It serves as a strategic transit hub, providing India with access to Afghanistan and Central Asia while bypassing Pakistan.
- The port's development aims to enhance trade and connectivity in the region.



Glossing over unemployment, its high electoral price

The Indian economy requires 25 million-plus jobs to be generated over the next five years in order to employ all those who are presently unemployed in this nation.

The Narendra Modi government has claimed that the Indian economy, judged by GDP, grew at an impressively rapid pace of 8% last year. But even if that claim is true, it has not created an adequate number of appropriate jobs going by the current unemployment in India.

Using the latest official statistics, the unemployment rate for people aged 15 years or above may have dipped from 4.2% in 2021 to 3.1% in 2023, but this is not commensurate with the rapid GDP growth rate of 8%.

As seen in the results of the 2024 general election, it is clear that the Bharatiya Janata Party has paid the price for the setback, thus losing its majority in Parliament. It has had to form a coalition government with parties that follow a contrary economic ideology.

Inequality gap is widening

The gap between the haves and have-nots has widened in the last two decades. Moreover, throughout the past decade under BJP central rule, official statistics reveal a sharp rise in wealth inequality. About 1% of India's population now owns 40% of the country's wealth. This is terrible for any democratic population and state, if not for the stability of the nation.

This is what is graphically called "K-shaped" inequality in the economy, i.e., consumption/income for a few is rising, while for a large proportion of the less well-to-do population, it is sliding, i.e., it is decreasing



Subramanian Swamy

a former Union Minister of Commerce and Law and Justice

There have been few takers for the government's claims about GDP growth, reflected in the election results

'K'-wise. In public meetings, Prime Minister Modi has claimed that because of GDP growth in the last nine years of his tenure, the economy has lifted 25 crore people out of poverty (by investing heavily in capital expenditure). Government economists also claim that the Modi government has succeeded in establishing sustained and fast-paced economic growth, making people happy. This remains to be seen in the next three years.

In fact, the electoral outcome has raised questions about this claim which experts of the government vide news media had touted – that India is the "fastest-growing large economy in the world".

On the contrary, there are few takers for this claim in the electorate. This is now confirmed by the sharp fall in the bench strength of the BJP's Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha. The decline has in fact been shattering for the party, which now has to rely on two – one State each – "regional" parties.

The BJP government's economic management needs to be overhauled. However, the recent announcement of the appointments of the cabinet Ministers dashes these hopes.

Growth could slip

The Modi government frequently claims that the 2023-24 GDP growth of 8.2% has come on top of the strong 7% growth in 2022-23. How this was calculated has not been disclosed.

India's growth in the last two years has been pushed via a significantly large Budget deficit for funding the government's massive capital expenditure. But this has not been done by structural investments in the industrial,

agricultural, and service sectors. It may be recalled that the GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2019-20, fell from 8% to 3.8%. GDP growth rate in 2015-16, i.e., April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 when compared to April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, was about 8%. Each financial year has four quarters, namely, April 1-June 30, July 1-September 30, October 1-December 31, and January 1-March 31. In the pre-COVID-19 quarter, January 1, 2020 to March 31, 2020, when compared to January 1, 2019-March 31, 2019, GDP growth declined to a 3.4% annual equivalent year.

Hence, the 8.2% growth registered in 2023-24 by the Finance Ministry appears to be a flash in the pan. It is doubtful if it can be maintained in 2024-25. Indeed, those who study serious quantitative economics expect growth to slip further.

Need for a new strategy

During the last decade, this government's economists have frequently called for the "next generation of reforms" to accelerate national economic growth. It remains to be seen if this is possible as the BJP has lost its majority in Parliament and its allies do not have the same economic perspective as the BJP.

Moreover, in agriculture, 92% of the jobs are in the unorganised sector. In industry and services, 73% of the jobs created are in the small- and medium-informal sections. The government and formal private sector account for a mere 27% of jobs. Thus, India now needs a new long-term economic strategy – a tall order as the BJP lacks a cohesive majority in Parliament and has no economist to speak frankly to the relevant Ministers.

- **Modernization and Innovation:** Introducing policies that encourage technological advancements, innovation, and digital transformation across sectors to enhance productivity and competitiveness.
- **Structural Reforms:** Addressing structural bottlenecks in the economy such as labor market reforms, tax reforms, land acquisition reforms, and simplification of regulatory frameworks to improve ease of doing business.

The Kerala Left needs to look in the mirror (02 July)

It cannot counter the Right by adopting the latter's playbook or by electoral engineering

- The 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Kerala showed significant changes:
- BJP won its first historic seat in the state.
- NDA's vote share increased by 3.57% to 19.21%.
- BJP increased its vote share to over 30% in three constituencies, up from one in 2019.
- BJP emerged first in 11 Assembly segments, compared to one in 2019, and second in nine segments, down from seven.
- These gains came partly at the expense of Left strongholds.
- The Left's electoral setback is not just due to anti-incumbency but also due to financial issues and corruption allegations against the CPI(M)-led government.
- The communist movement in Kerala historically mobilized peasant and working classes, addressing class, caste, and linguistic exclusions.
- The Left's influence in Kerala society, built through civil society and cultural engagements, is now being challenged by the rise of Hindutva.
- The 2024 Lok Sabha election results in Kerala have raised concerns for the Left due to significant shifts.
- BJP secured its first historic seat in Kerala and saw a rise in vote share to 19.21%.
- BJP's vote share crossed 30% in three constituencies, up from one in 2019, and performed well in Assembly segments.
- Left strongholds were affected, partly due to anti-incumbency and allegations of corruption against the CPI(M)-led government.
- Kerala's communist movement historically mobilized peasants and working classes, addressing class, caste, and linguistic exclusions.
- The Left's cultural and societal influence, known as "Left common sense," faces challenges with the rise of Hindutva.
- Kerala has seen a growth in RSS shakhas, particularly active around temples and festivals, impacting cultural narratives.
- The shift towards Hindu nationalism mirrors Gramsci's concept of a "war of position," influencing cultural ideology.
- Despite recent electoral victories, the Left in Kerala struggles to counter the cultural dominance of the Right.

- Issues like the Sabarimala temple entry controversy have forced the Left to adjust its stance, reacting rather than initiating new ideological programs.
- The Left's response includes organizing secular events during religious festivals, but faces criticisms for its stance on international issues like Palestine.
- Kerala's Left is also criticized for developing authoritarian tendencies under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, diverging from its traditional collective leadership approach.
- The rise of personality cults and intolerance towards dissent through legal actions against political leaders and journalists is noted as unprecedented in Kerala's political history.
- The Left cannot counter the Right by adopting their strategies or through electoral tactics alone.
- True progress can only come through revitalizing democracy and achieving complete equality in class, caste, and gender.
- Despite communist promises, Dalits and Adivasis in Kerala remain marginalized in socioeconomic terms.
- Hindutva appeals to some marginalized groups due to disillusionment with secular alternatives.
- In recent elections, 32% of OBC Ezhavas/Thiyyas voted for the NDA, signaling shifts in political allegiance.
- The People's Plan initiated in 1996 aimed at bottom-up participatory planning but has seen a decline in local government powers since then.
- To revive Kerala's welfare state, there is a need to strengthen local democracy against top-down development projects and economic populism promoted by the Right.

A tool to ensure complete voter anonymity (02 July)

The Election Commission has repeatedly proposed the use of totaliser to avoid identification of areas according to voting behaviour. But the government has said it does not serve a larger public interest

- Devesh Chandra Thakur, a Janata Dal (United) candidate from Sitamarhi Lok Sabha seat, made controversial remarks breaching the Model Code of Conduct.
- He stated that Muslims and Yadavs, who did not support him in the elections, should not expect help from him, but they could come for tea and snacks.
- His remarks were criticized for undermining democratic principles and the constitutional duty of elected representatives.
- The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), despite losing in the constituency, emphasized that elected leaders should work for everyone without discrimination based on caste or community.

- Thakur's party, JD(U), attempted to mitigate the backlash from his statements through issued statements.

The ECI's proposal

- Voter secrecy is crucial in elections to prevent retribution or inducements affecting voting decisions.
- Rule 56 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 mandates rejection of ballot papers bearing marks identifying the voter.
- Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) replaced traditional ballot boxes but do not allow mixing of ballot papers from different boxes during counting.
- The totaliser system was proposed in 2007 to address concerns about voter identification based on booth-level voting patterns.
- Authorized EVM manufacturers, in consultation with the Technical Experts Committee of the Election Commission of India (ECI), developed and demonstrated the totaliser in 2008.
- Political parties initially had no objections to using the totaliser, which was trialed in bye-elections in 2009 in Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh.
- Since then, the adoption of totalisers has been debated among the ECI, government, and courts, with delays and changes in government stance affecting its implementation.
- In August 2011, the Madras High Court in W.P. 11919/2011 directed the government to consider the Election Commission of India's (ECI) recommendation to amend Rules for introducing the totaliser system.
- The ECI estimated it would take about four months to fully deploy the totaliser system.
- Despite initial efforts, there was a delay in implementing the totaliser system after the ECI's recommendation.
- In April 2014, Yogesh Gupta filed W.P. 422/2014 in the Supreme Court, seeking to preserve voter privacy by declaring Parliamentary Constituency results as a whole instead of separately by voting machine.
- The ECI supported the totaliser system in its counter-affidavit filed in June 2014, emphasizing the need for Rules amendment.
- The Supreme Court sought clarification on whether the ECI could issue instructions for totaliser use without amending existing Rules.

Political parties' views

- The Law Commission of India, in its 255th Report, supported the Election Commission's proposal to introduce totaliser for counting votes.
- In February 2016, the government argued in the Yogesh Gupta case that totaliser usage did not serve a significant public interest.
- The Election Commission strongly advocated for the use of totaliser to protect voter interests, conducting a demonstration for political parties in March 2016.

- Political parties varied in their support: BSP, Congress, and NCP were in favor; CPI(M) suggested phased introduction; CPI did not express a view; BJP opposed totaliser.
- In 2016, the government referred the matter to a group of ministers, which concluded that revealing booth-wise voting patterns would benefit development activities.
- In October 2017, Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay filed W.P (C) No. 927/2017 seeking the use of totaliser, supported by the EC.
- The issue of data leakage from EVMs was raised by the government in response.
- The matter has remained inactive since March 2018, prompting debate on whether technology can mitigate biases and tendencies.

COMPLETE COURSE FOR IAS/PCS GENERAL STUDIES (GS) 2025 & 2026 PRELIMS CUM MAINS CUM INTERVIEW PROGRAMME

BEST OF THE DELHI, BETTER THAN DELHI

Patriotic IAS



पैडलेगंज, गोरखपुर

THE APPROACH OF THIS COURSE IS TO TEACH STUDENTS VERY BASIC CONCEPTS AND ENABLE THEM TO SOLVE THE IAS/PCS PRELIMS AND MAINS QUESTIONS BY THE END OF THE CLASS LECTURE.

At the end of Pride Month, assessing the LGBTQIA+ communities' rights

The decriminalisation of Section 377 in 2018 was a huge victory for LGBTQIA+ communities, but the road towards equality before the law is long

GS Paper I: Society

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

Every year, June is observed as Pride Month the world over. The contributions of members of the LGBTQIA+ communities are commemorated, and love, diversity, and acceptance are celebrated. This year, too, pride marches were held across India, not only in metropolises, but also in smaller towns.

The rights and status of the LGBTQIA+ communities vary across the world. Map 1 shows the legal status of same-sex acts in different countries as of 2024. At present, as many as 59 countries penalise any expression of queerness. In countries such as Ghana and Indonesia, those engaging in homosexual activities are punished with imprisonment or worse, death.

While 79 countries have banned same-sex marriage, 37 have fully legalised it. Map 2 shows the status of same-sex marriage in different countries around the world as of 2024.

A few countries have also left the communities unrecognised, rendering their status ambiguous. India falls under this category. Some have allowed same-sex couples to opt for civil unions. While the Supreme Court of India decriminalised homosexuality in 2018 by partially striking down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the Indian queer communities' plea to the Court to legalise same-sex unions was rejected in October 2023. Indian courts have acknowledged same-sex couples' right to cohabitation.

Although being queer is not a crime in India any more, people who identify as queer still face discrimination, harassment, and exclusion. They are not afforded the legal aid necessary to protect themselves from discrimination.

Transgender and intersex employees in India can seek legal re-

course in the face of discrimination on the basis of gender in hiring, promotion, termination, or harassment. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, prohibits unfair treatment with regard to employment, education, healthcare, public facilities, residence, and more.

India is one of the four countries in the world that provides employee legal aid only on the basis of gender identity, including transgender persons. However, employees are not guaranteed any legal aid when discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation. There is no means of legally registering or identifying one's sexuality. Legal aid is available on the basis of sexual orientation in 27 countries.

In 90 countries around the world, there are no legal protections available to queer employees. Map 3 shows different countries' stances on employee discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality, as of 2024.

In India, members of the LGBTQIA+ communities cannot be recognised as co-parents to an adopted child. However, as per the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, a prospective adoptive parent is allowed to adopt a child irrespective of marital status.

Currently, 39 countries around the world allow same-sex parents to adopt children, and 45 countries have banned the same. However, 100 countries have arrangements similar to India, wherein single parents are allowed to adopt children, with certain conditions.

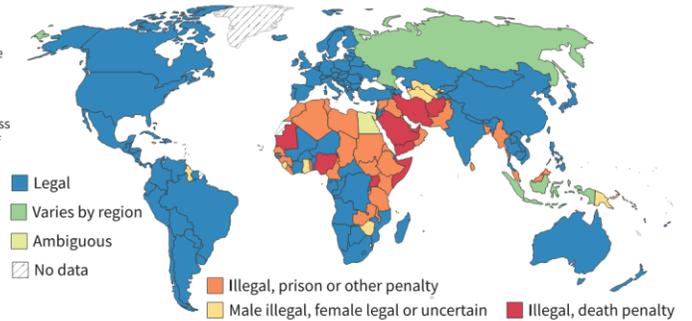
The decriminalisation of Section 377 was undoubtedly a huge victory for the LGBTQIA+ communities in India.

However, queer people still struggle to fight for their constitutional rights, for acceptance in their families, for recognition and growth in their jobs, for equality and justice in their everyday lives and interactions, and overall inclusion.

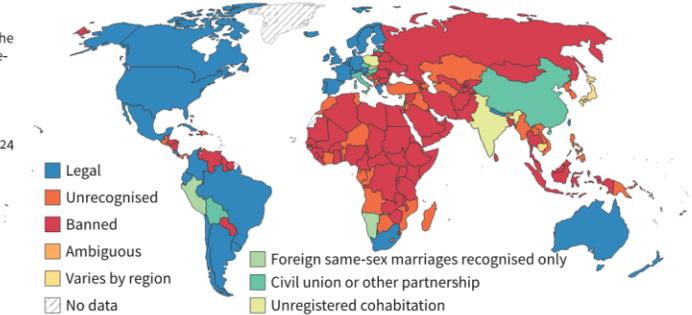
Pride and prejudice

The maps were sourced from Our World in Data

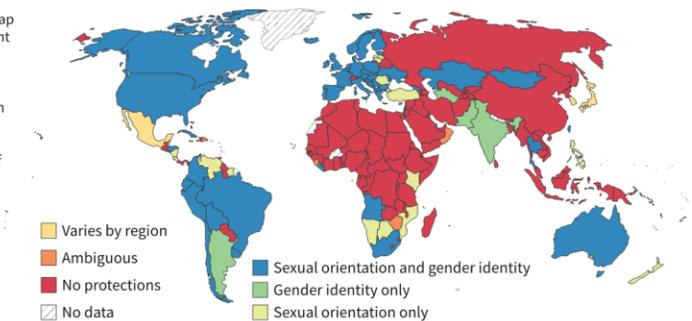
Map 1: The map shows the legal status of same-sex acts in different countries across the world as of 2024



Map 2: The map depicts the status of same-sex marriage in different countries around the world as of 2024



Map 3: The map shows different countries' stances on employee discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality as of 2024



The LGBTQIA+ community refers to a diverse group of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and others whose sexual orientations, gender identities, or expressions do not conform to heterosexual and cisgender norms.

National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (2014):

- This judgment recognized the "third gender" or transgender persons.

- The court acknowledged the rights of individuals who don't identify as male or female to self-identify their gender.
- It directed the government to grant legal recognition to transgender identities and provide them with various welfare benefits.

Navtej Johar v. Union of India (2018):

- This case involved a curative petition challenging the earlier judgment of Suresh Kumar Koushal v. NAZ Foundation (2013) that upheld Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, criminalizing consensual same-sex relationships.
- A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court, in a historic decision, struck down Section 377 to the extent that it criminalized homosexuality.
- This judgment recognized the right to equality and dignity for LGBTQ individuals and paved the way for greater acceptance.

Anjali Guru Sanjana Jaan v. Union of India (2022):

- This case expanded the definition of family to include same-sex couples and queer relationships.
- This judgment has implications for inheritance rights, property rights, and other aspects where family status is considered.

"Same-Sex Marriage Petitions Case" or "Same-Sex Marriage Legalization Petitions Case":

- It's important to note that in October 2023, the Supreme Court rejected petitions seeking to legalize same-sex marriage in India.
- The court clarified that it doesn't have the authority to modify the Special Marriage Act and that the responsibility lies with the legislature.

Will the Hosur airport become a reality?

What are the challenges and obstacles to the Hosur airport project proposed by the Tamil Nadu government? Why is the project being proposed for Hosur? How can an airport gain clearance from the Civil Aviation Ministry? What is the process to be followed?

EXPLAINER

Sanjay Vijavakumar

The story so far:

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced in the legislative assembly plans for setting up an international airport on 2,000 acres of land, with the capacity to handle three crore passengers annually, in the industrial town of Hosur, which is 40 kms away from Bengaluru. While the airport has been a long standing demand of the industrialists in the area, one of the hurdles is that the concession agreement signed between the Centre and the Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), the operator of Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru, does not allow for new or existing airports (except for Mysore and Hassan airports) within an aerial distance of 150 kms before 2033.

What is the significance of Hosur?

Hosur in Krishnagiri district is located on the border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Hosur is situated at 3,000 metres above sea level and according to a report by online publisher Visual Capitalist in 2021, it was ranked 13 in the world among the list of cities with the fastest population growth with an annual growth rate of 5.38%. Hosur has emerged as a flourishing industrial town with prominent companies such as Tata Electronics, TVS, Ashok Leyland, Titan, and Rolls-Royce (IAMPL) establishing significant operations in the area. It has emerged as a nucleus for auto and electric vehicle manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, logistics and electronics. The industrial town is also strong in traditional sectors like floriculture and horticulture. Estimates suggest that around 3,000 MSMEs are present in the region, engaged in engineering fabrication, tooling, and polishing, among others.

The State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited



ISTOCKPHOTO

(SIPCOT), the State government's nodal agency to promote industrial infrastructure, has established industrial parks in Hosur in two phases spread over 2,093 acres. SIPCOT is currently in the process of acquiring land of 3,382.84 acres for expanding and setting up new industrial parks in the region. Private industrial parks have also come up in the region. To meet the water requirement of the industries located in the Hosur area, SIPCOT is establishing a 20 megalitres per day Tertiary Treatment Reverse Osmosis (TTRO) plant at Kelavrapalli, which is expected to be completed by September.

According to Tamil Nadu Industries Minister T.R.B Rajaa, the airport project in Hosur will enhance connectivity and stimulate economic growth, benefiting not only Hosur but also neighbouring districts such as Dharmapuri and Salem.

He has also pointed out that the new airport will foster a twin-city ecosystem with Bengaluru, propelling growth in both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

What about the previous plan?

Hosur airport is owned by Taneja Aerospace and Aviation Limited. In 2023, replying to a question by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Rajya Sabha MP P. Wilson, the then Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation General (retired) V.K. Singh said in the first round of bidding under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)- Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN), a bid was received for the routes Chennai-Hosur-Chennai and due to the concession agreement with BIAL the route was not awarded and Hosur airport was deleted from UDAN document for future round of bidding.

What does the Union Civil Aviation Ministry's guidelines state?

As per the present guidelines of the Civil Aviation Ministry, the regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) while granting licence to operate a greenfield airport should take into account that no greenfield airport would be allowed within an aerial distance of 150 kms of an existing civilian airport. In case a greenfield airport is proposed to be set up within 150 kms of an existing civilian airport, the impact on the existing airport would be examined and such cases would be decided by the government on a case to case basis. Such an application shall be first considered by the Steering Committee, headed by the Secretary of Civil Aviation. After considering the application, the Steering Committee shall make a suitable recommendation to the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The Ministry shall place the matter before the Union Cabinet for its consideration and the DGCA would grant a licence only after their approval.

In 2017, the Centre granted in-principle approval for a greenfield airport at Jewar in Greater Noida based on the recommendations of the Steering Committee on Greenfield Airports. The Noida International Airport is located 72 kms from the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, Delhi and 65 kms from the Hindon Air Force station Ghaziabad. The Centre said the airport in Delhi NCR region will help decongest the IGI Airport and will serve the people of Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Aligarh, Agra, and Faridabad.

What next?

Airport projects have a long gestation period to come on stream. Given that the DMK government is part of the Opposition alliance, it has to negotiate hard with the Centre to get the necessary relaxation in norms for setting up the airport, besides other regulatory and environmental clearances. Setting up the necessary supporting infrastructure for the airport is another challenge which needs to be overcome.

THE GIST

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced plans for setting up an international airport on 2,000 acres of land, with the capacity to handle three crore passengers annually, in the industrial town of Hosur, which is 40 kms away from Bengaluru.

As per the present guidelines of the Civil Aviation Ministry, no greenfield airport would be allowed within an aerial distance of 150 kms of an existing civilian airport.

Given that the DMK government is part of the Opposition alliance, it has to negotiate hard with the Centre to get the necessary relaxation in norms for setting up the airport.

What is on the agenda for the 16th Finance Commission?

How do other countries devolve funds to their local governments? Why is the Census significant?

GS Paper II:
Constitutional Body

The story so far:

The 16th Finance Commission (FC) has begun its work, established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution, primarily focusing on the devolution of the consolidated fund. Since the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, local bodies have gained significant recognition within the federal system. These amendments introduced sub-clauses 280 (3) (bb) and (c), which mandate the FC to recommend measures to augment State consolidated funds for supporting panchayats and municipalities.

What about cities?

The National Commission on Urbanisation in the mid-80s described cities as "engines of growth." Although this view is somewhat narrow, the reality is that cities contribute around 66% of India's GDP and about 90% of total government revenues. Cities, thus, are an

GS Paper III: Taxation

important spatial zone for the overall development of the country. However, our economic scale is insufficient to meet rising needs. The World Bank estimates that \$840 billion is needed for basic urban infrastructure in the next decade.

Despite the efforts of five commissions since the 11th Finance Commission, financial devolution to cities remain inadequate. The fiscal health of municipalities is poor, affecting both city productivity and quality of life. Rapid urbanisation without appropriate fiscal action has adverse effects on development. Intergovernmental transfers (IGTs) to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India are about 0.5% of GDP, much lower than the 2-5% typical of other developing nations. For instance, South Africa allocates 2.6%, Mexico 1.6%, the Philippines 2.5%, and Brazil 5.1% of their GDPs to their cities. Although IGTs make up about 40% of ULBs' total revenue, issues persist regarding their predictability, earmarking for vulnerable groups, and horizontal equity. IGTs are

crucial for ULBs, given their financial state and the need for stable support until their own revenues improve.

What about the taxation system?

The introduction of the Goods and Service Tax (GST) has reduced ULBs' tax revenue (excluding property tax) from about 23% in 2012-13 to around 9% in 2017-18. IGTs from States to ULBs are very low, with State Finance Commissions recommending only about 7% of States' own revenue in 2018-19. Increasing the quantum of IGTs as a percentage of GDP is necessary. Despite the 74th constitutional amendment's aim to financially strengthen ULBs, progress over three decades has fallen short.

The 13th Finance Commission observed that "parallel agencies and bodies are emasculating local governments both financially and operationally." Local governments require support from Union and State governments through funds, functionaries, and technical aid. However,

the growth of parallel agencies has distorted local governments' roles. Programs like the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme and the Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme exacerbate this issue, distorting the federal structure.

How important is the Census?

In the absence of the 2021 Census, reliance on 2011 data is inadequate for evidence-based fiscal devolution. India has approximately 4,000 statutory towns and an equal number of Census towns, with an estimated 23,000 villages, all of which are effectively urban. These figures must be captured by the 16th FC, including the significant migration to Tier-2 and 3 cities.

Thus, the 15th FC's nine guiding principles require a revisit. Not all of them but reference to enhancement in property tax collection in tandem to the State's GST; maintenance of accounts; resource allocation for mitigating pollution; focus on primary health care, solid waste management, drinking water, etc., deserve attention. The 16th FC must consider India's urbanisation dynamism and ensure IGTs to urban areas are at least doubled. A McKinsey Global Institute report warns that if India continues investing in urban infrastructure at current rates, urban infrastructure will fall short, leading to water supply issues and untreated sewage.

Author is former Deputy Mayor, Shimla, and Member, Kerala Urban Commission.

THE GIST

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The 16th FC must consider India's urbanisation dynamism and ensure IGTs to urban areas are at least doubled.

Finance Commission outlined in Article 280 of the Constitution of India:

Composition

- Appointment:** The Finance Commission is constituted by the President of India every five years or earlier as deemed necessary.
- Members:** It consists of a **Chairman and four other members** appointed by the President. They serve for a term specified by the President and may be eligible for reappointment.
- Qualifications and Selection:** Parliament determines the qualifications of Commission members and the selection process. The Chairman is typically someone with experience in public affairs, while the other members are chosen from individuals with expertise in:
 - Judiciary (High Court judge or qualified to be one)
 - Finance and government accounts
 - Financial administration
 - Economics

Functions

- Distribution of Tax Proceeds:** Recommending the division of net tax proceeds between the Union Government and State Governments. It also advises on the allocation of these shares among the states.
- Grants-in-Aid:** Determining the principles governing grants-in-aid to states from the Consolidated Fund of India under Article 275 of the Constitution. These grants are aimed at supporting state finances.
- Local Bodies' Resources:** Advising on measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of a state to enhance the resources of Panchayats and municipalities within the state. This is based on recommendations from State Finance Commissions.

- **Other Matters:** Addressing any additional issues referred by the President that are crucial for maintaining sound financial management and stability.

Union (Central Government):

- The Union Government has the authority to levy and collect taxes on specific subjects mentioned in the Union List under the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. These subjects include:
 - Income Tax: Tax on income, corporate profits, and capital gains falls under the purview of the Central Government.
 - Customs Duty: Taxes on goods imported into the country.
 - Central Excise Duty: Taxes on goods manufactured or produced in India.
 - Service Tax/Goods and Services Tax (GST): Tax on services and goods at the national level.
 - Other taxes within the exclusive domain of the Central Government as specified in the Union List.

State Governments:

- State Governments have the power to levy and collect taxes on subjects specified in the State List of the Seventh Schedule. State-level taxes include:
 - Value Added Tax (VAT)/Sales Tax: Tax on the sale of goods within a state.
 - Stamp Duty: Tax on legal documents, agreements, and transactions.
 - State Excise Duty: Tax on alcohol and liquor for consumption within the state.
 - Land Revenue: Tax on land holdings and property within the state.
 - Professional Tax: Tax on professional earning individuals within the state.

Local Bodies (Municipalities and Panchayats):

- Local bodies, such as municipalities and panchayats, have the power to levy and collect taxes for local services and governance. Some common taxes levied by local bodies include:
 - Property Tax: Tax on residential, commercial, and industrial properties within the jurisdiction of the local body.
 - Octroi: Tax on the entry of goods into a local area for consumption.
 - Water Tax: Tax on the consumption of water supply services.
 - LPT (Local Body Tax): Tax levied by local bodies for services rendered at the local level, such as maintenance of roads, sanitation, and public facilities.

15th FC's nine guiding principles require a revisit:

- **Equity:** Ensuring fairness and equity in the distribution of financial resources among states, taking into account their respective needs and capabilities.
- **Efficiency:** Promoting efficient use of resources by encouraging fiscal discipline, rationalization of expenditures, and effective governance practices.
- **Balance:** Striking a balance between the requirements of national development and the needs of individual states, with due consideration to regional disparities.
- **Sustainability:** Ensuring sustainability of public finances and fiscal stability, both at the Union and State levels, to promote long-term economic growth and stability.

- **Inter-State and Intra-State Equity:** Addressing disparities not only between states but also within states, particularly focusing on equitable development across regions and communities.
- **Core Commitments and Fiscal Federalism:** Upholding the principles of fiscal federalism and respecting the autonomy of states while ensuring compliance with core national objectives.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Promoting accountability and transparency in financial transfers, allocation of resources, and utilization of funds by states and local bodies.
- **Incentivizing Reforms:** Providing incentives to states for implementing reforms in areas such as public finance management, revenue mobilization, and governance.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that the allocation of resources and financial transfers benefit all segments of society, including marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

PMI signals manufacturing rebound

HSBC India's June survey of purchasing managers shows fresh hires by manufacturers rose to a 19-year high; consumer goods record strongest performance, while export order growth eases from May; optimism declines to a three-month low

GS Paper III

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Manufacturing activity rebounded in June, with an uptick in new orders, output and input purchases, even as producers raised goods' prices by the greatest extent in more than two years, and scaled up hiring to the highest level in at least 19 years, as per a survey-based index.

The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) increased to 58.3 in June, from May's 57.5, indicating a sharper improvement in

Expansion mode

HSBC India's Manufacturing PMI signals activity rebounded in June, with an uptick in new orders, output, input purchases

■ The PMI increased to 58.3 in June, from May's reading of 57.5

■ Producers' optimism about prospects in the coming year slid to a 3-month low, 29% see growth



■ Performance of the consumer goods industry was strong

business conditions.

Producers' optimism about prospects in the coming year slid to a three-month low, with about 29% expecting growth over

the year ahead.

The performance of the consumer goods industry was strong, with substantial increases were also noted in the intermediate

and investment goods categories, HSBC said in a statement on the index. Intermediate goods makers registered the quickest increase in input costs, while consumer goods producers led the upturn in output charges.

Although input costs receded from May levels, they were still among the highest in two years. Feedback from about 400 firms surveyed for the index suggested that staff expenses intensified in June, along with rising costs of transportation and materials used as inputs such as aluminium, plastic and steel.

New export orders also increased substantially in June. "Despite [orders] easing from May, the rate of expansion was well above its long-run average," HSBC said.

"Manufacturers were able to pass on higher costs to customers, as demand remained robust, resulting in improved margins," said Maitreyi Das, global economist at HSBC. "While the overall outlook for the manufacturing sector remains positive, the future output index receded to a three-month low, albeit it remains above the historical average," she added.

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)

- The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an economic indicator derived from monthly surveys of private sector companies.
- It provides information about the prevailing economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors.

Definition

- The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is a measure of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors.
- It is calculated based on surveys of purchasing managers, who are responsible for buying goods and services for their organizations.

Components

The PMI is based on five major indicators:

1. **New Orders:** Measures the level of new orders placed with manufacturers.
2. **Inventory Levels:** Indicates the level of inventory held by manufacturers.
3. **Production:** Measures the production level of goods.
4. **Supplier Deliveries:** Tracks the speed of deliveries by suppliers.
5. **Employment Environment:** Assesses the employment trends within the sector.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question 1: Consider the following statements regarding the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI):

1. PMI is a survey-based measure that assesses the manufacturing and services sectors separately.
2. A PMI score below 50 indicates economic expansion.
3. PMI is usually released at the start of every month and is considered a leading indicator of economic activity.
4. PMI reports are compiled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 4 only
- c) 1, 3, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3 only

Question 2: With reference to the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), consider the following statements:

1. PMI is a number from 0 to 100, where a score above 50 represents economic expansion.
2. The PMI data is released annually and is used as a lagging indicator of economic activity.
3. PMI includes data on new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries, and employment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Question 3: With reference to Project-75I, consider the following statements:

1. Project-75I is an initiative by the Indian Navy to construct nuclear-powered submarines.
2. The project aims to build submarines with air-independent propulsion systems.
3. The submarines under Project-75I will be constructed entirely in foreign shipyards.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Question 4: Consider the following statements about Project-75I:

1. The project aims to incorporate advanced stealth features in the submarines.
2. It is being executed under the Ministry of Defense's Strategic Partnership model.
3. Project-75I will exclusively use indigenous components and technology.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Question 5: With reference to the Finance Commission of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Finance Commission is a constitutional body.
2. The recommendations made by the Finance Commission are binding on the government.
3. The Finance Commission is constituted every five years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Question 6: Consider the following statements regarding the Finance Commission:

1. The Finance Commission is responsible for defining the principles that should govern the grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre.
2. The Finance Commission's recommendations on the distribution of tax revenues are binding on the government.
3. The Finance Commission also suggests measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Question 7: Consider the following statements about the Higgs Boson or "God Particle":

1. The Higgs Boson is an elementary particle in the Standard Model of particle physics.
2. Its discovery was confirmed by experiments conducted at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in CERN.
3. The Higgs Boson is responsible for giving mass to other fundamental particles through the Higgs mechanism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Question 8: Consider the following statements regarding the Higgs Boson, often referred to as the "God Particle":

1. The Higgs Boson is an elementary particle predicted by the Standard Model of particle physics.
2. The discovery of the Higgs Boson was confirmed by experiments conducted at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) in the United States.
3. The Higgs Boson interacts with other particles through the Higgs field, which is responsible for giving particles their mass.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATION

Question 1: Consider the following statements regarding the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI):

1. PMI is a survey-based measure that assesses the manufacturing and services sectors separately.
2. A PMI score below 50 indicates economic expansion.
3. PMI is usually released at the start of every month and is considered a leading indicator of economic activity.
4. PMI reports are compiled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 4 only
- c) 1, 3, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3 only

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1: Correct.** PMI is indeed a survey-based measure that assesses the manufacturing and services sectors separately. A composite index is also constructed from these two sectors.
- **Statement 2: Incorrect.** A PMI score below 50 indicates economic contraction, not expansion. A score above 50 indicates expansion, while a reading at 50 indicates no change.
- **Statement 3: Correct.** PMI is usually released at the start of every month and is considered a leading indicator of economic activity.
- **Statement 4: Incorrect.** PMI reports are compiled by IHS Markit, not the International Monetary Fund (IMF). IHS Markit is part of S&P Global and is a global leader in information, analytics, and solutions

Question 2: With reference to the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), consider the following statements:

1. PMI is a number from 0 to 100, where a score above 50 represents economic expansion.
2. The PMI data is released annually and is used as a lagging indicator of economic activity.
3. PMI includes data on new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries, and employment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

Answer: c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1: Correct.** As mentioned previously, a PMI score above 50 indicates expansion in the relevant sector (manufacturing or services), while a score below 50 suggests contraction.
- **Statement 2: Incorrect.** PMI data is released monthly, not annually, and is considered a leading indicator of economic activity, not a lagging indicator.

<p>a) 1 only b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 3: Correct. PMI includes data on new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries, and employment.
<p>Question 3: With reference to Project-75I, consider the following statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project-75I is an initiative by the Indian Navy to construct nuclear-powered submarines. 2. The project aims to build submarines with air-independent propulsion systems. 3. The submarines under Project-75I will be constructed entirely in foreign shipyards. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 2 only c) 1 and 3 only d) 2 and 3 only</p>	<p>Answer: b) 2 only Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 1: Incorrect. Project-75I is an initiative to construct diesel-electric submarines, not nuclear-powered submarines. • Statement 2: Correct. The project aims to build submarines with air-independent propulsion systems, which enhance underwater endurance and stealth. • Statement 3: Incorrect. The submarines under Project-75I are to be constructed in Indian shipyards under a strategic partnership model, not entirely in foreign shipyards.
<p>Question 4: Consider the following statements about Project-75I:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project aims to incorporate advanced stealth features in the submarines. 2. It is being executed under the Ministry of Defense's Strategic Partnership model. 3. Project-75I will exclusively use indigenous components and technology. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 only b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 2 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: c) 1 and 2 only Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 1: Correct. The project aims to incorporate advanced stealth features in the submarines, making them less detectable. • Statement 2: Correct. It is being executed under the Ministry of Defense's Strategic Partnership model. • Statement 3: Incorrect. Project-75I will use both indigenous and foreign components and technology, facilitated through technology transfer.
<p>Question 5: With reference to the Finance Commission of India, consider the following statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Finance Commission is a constitutional body. 2. The recommendations made by the Finance Commission are binding on the government. 3. The Finance Commission is constituted every five years. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p>	<p>Answer: b) 1 and 3 only Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 1: Correct. The Finance Commission is a constitutional body established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution. The Finance Commission is not a permanent body; it is constituted every five years or at such earlier time as the President considers necessary.

<p>a) 1 only b) 1 and 3 only c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 2: Incorrect. The recommendations made by the Finance Commission are advisory and not binding on the government. • Statement 3: Correct. The Finance Commission is constituted every five years.
<p>Question 6: Consider the following statements regarding the Finance Commission:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Finance Commission is responsible for defining the principles that should govern the grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre. 2. The Finance Commission's recommendations on the distribution of tax revenues are binding on the government. 3. The Finance Commission also suggests measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: b) 1 and 3 only</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 1: Correct. The Finance Commission is responsible for defining the principles that should govern the grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre. • Statement 2: Incorrect. The recommendations of the Finance Commission are advisory and not binding on the government. • Statement 3: Correct. The Finance Commission also suggests measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities.
<p>Question 7: Consider the following statements about the Higgs Boson or "God Particle":</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Higgs Boson is an elementary particle in the Standard Model of particle physics. 2. Its discovery was confirmed by experiments conducted at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in CERN. 3. The Higgs Boson is responsible for giving mass to other fundamental particles through the Higgs mechanism. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 3 only d) 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Answer: d) 1, 2, and 3</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 1: Correct. The Higgs Boson is indeed an elementary particle predicted by the Standard Model of particle physics. • Statement 2: Correct. The discovery of the Higgs Boson was confirmed in 2012 through experiments conducted at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research). • Statement 3: Correct. The Higgs Boson is crucial in the Higgs mechanism, which explains how other fundamental particles acquire mass.

Question 8: Consider the following statements regarding the Higgs Boson, often referred to as the "God Particle":

1. The Higgs Boson is an elementary particle predicted by the Standard Model of particle physics.
2. The discovery of the Higgs Boson was confirmed by experiments conducted at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) in the United States.
3. The Higgs Boson interacts with other particles through the Higgs field, which is responsible for giving particles their mass.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1: Correct.** The Higgs Boson is indeed an elementary particle predicted by the Standard Model of particle physics. It was theorized to exist to explain how other fundamental particles acquire mass.
- **Statement 2: Incorrect.** The discovery of the Higgs Boson was confirmed by experiments conducted at CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Switzerland, not at Fermilab in the United States.
- **Statement 3: Correct.** The Higgs Boson interacts with other particles through the Higgs field. This field permeates the universe and is responsible for giving particles their mass through the Higgs mechanism.