

India's Largest Online Community for IAS, Civil Services Aspirants

UPSC PORTAL

<http://www.upscportal.com>

VOL- 16

THE GIST *of*

THE HINDU ❖

YOJANA ❖

KURUKSHETRA ❖

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU ❖

SCIENCE REPORTER ❖

THE HINDU

Science

Reporter



Kurukshetra

A JOURNAL ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT



YOJANA

Press Information Bureau

News from
1st Jan. 2014 to 31th Jan. 2014



ONLINE COACHING FOR IAS EXAMS

at Just Rs. 100/Month

Register Now

www.upscportal.com/courses

FREE
TRIAL 7
DAY

<http://www.upscportal.com>

Contents

THE HINDU	2
India, Pakistan exchange nuclear facilities list	2
CCEA nod for additional foodgrains to States	4
GSLV-D5 launch places India in elite league	5
Rural sanitation works included under MGNREGS	6
Prithvi-II test-fired, covers full range	6
Environment Ministry softens stand	7
Japan wants India's support on disputes with China	9
India ranks below Pakistan in n-security index	9
South Korea keen on setting up nuclear power plant in India	13
India seeks Kuwait investment in LNG terminals	15
India to seek enhanced crude oil, LPG supplies from Saudi Arabia	16
Agni-IV Launch	21
Russia backs Iran's participation in Geneva-2 peace conference	22
Japan says U.S. base in Okinawa is only solution	23
Iran curbs nuclear activities; EU, US to lift sanctions	23
Thailand declares state of emergency for protests	27
Worst is over for Indian economy: Moody's Analytics	28
Myanmar to allow inspection of alleged massacre site	30
Stamp out kangaroo courts: SC	33
Humanitarian support masks intense political tussle during Geneva-2 talks	33
India to seek re-election to UNHRC	34
Reopen the Pathribal case	34
YOJANA	36
To be a "Tribe" in India	36
Climate Change- Reasons and It's Side Effects	37
Evidence from Some 'Latest Developed' States	38
The "Need", Costs and Alternatives to the Food Security Bill	40
Sabla: The Road to Empowerment and Self Esteem for Adolescent Girls	42
KURUKSHETRA	44
Panchayati Raj - Three Tier System in India	44
Government Programme to Empower Panchayati Raj	46
PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU	50
VVIP Choper Agreement	50
PARAM Supercomputer	50
Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2013	50
Security for women in public road transport in the country	51
Criteria for Giving Arjuna Award	51
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas-2014	52
Prithvi Launch Successful	53
56 crore Aadhaar Numbers issued by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)	53
India and UAE Agree to Promote Cooperation in Renewable Energy	53
India and Japan Enter into Memorandum in the Field of Tourism	54
India's Aviation Safety Record Above Global Average	54
Rabi Crop Sowing Crosses 642 Lakh Hectare Area	55
India as Top Investment Destination	55
India & UK Signs MOU to Enhance Collaboration	56
Global crude oil price of Indian Basket declines to US\$ 104.77 per bbl on 10.1.2014	57
SCIENCE REPORTER	58
Saffron the Golden Spice	58
Veggies that Repair Radiation Damage	60
Emerging Alternative to Satellite-based GPS	60

COURTESY:

- ◆ *The Hindu*
- ◆ *The Yojana*
- ◆ *Kurukshetra*
- ◆ *Press Information Bureau*
- ◆ *Science Reporter*



What made
Gandhi
Gandhi.

SOUL

UPSC PORTAL
www.upscportal.com

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Gist of

THE HINDU

▷ INDIA, PAKISTAN EXCHANGE NUCLEAR FACILITIES LIST

Pakistan and India handed over list of its nuclear installation to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Similarly External Affairs Ministry handed over its list to Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

Exchanged the list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral agreement that bars them from attacking each other's atomic facilities.

The agreement, which was signed on December 31, 1988 and entered into force on January 27, 1991, says that the two countries inform each other of nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the Agreement on January 1 of every calendar year.

This is the 23rd consecutive exchange of such lists between the two countries, the first one having taken place on January 1, 1992.

Pakistan and India also exchanged the lists of prisoners under the Consular Access Agreement between the two countries.

According to Foreign Office here, Pakistan has handed over a list of 281 Indian prisoners while India has reciprocated with a list detailing 396 Pakistani prisoners held in Indian jails.

As per the list, there are 232 Indian fishermen and 49 civilians in Pakistan jails.

India has 396 Pakistani prisoners of which 257 are civilians whereas 139 are fishermen.

▷ PRESIDENT NOD FOR LOKPAL BILL

The much talked-about Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2013, got President Pranab Mukherjee's assent. The Bill, which was passed by Parliament in the just-

concluded winter session, provides for creation of anti-graft ombudsman to investigate corruption charges against public functionaries including Prime Minister, Ministers and Members of Parliament.

Among other provisions, the Bill makes it incumbent upon States to make within a year their own law for setting up Lokayuktas on the lines of the Lokpal Bill.

The Bill was sent to the President on Tuesday. It will now be notified in the official gazette for it to become an Act. The Act shall be notified by the Law Ministry.

The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2011 and was taken up in the Rajya Sabha but could not be voted upon. It was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee. Later the Bill was tabled in the Rajya Sabha and referred to the select committee. The amended Bill was again tabled in the Rajya Sabha on December 16 and passed by voice vote. The following day, it was passed by the Lok Sabha without debate.

▷ INDIA TO CONDUCT ON-GROUND ASSESSMENT IN SOUTH SUDAN

India will conduct an on-ground assessment of its interests in South Sudan, especially the well being of its 2,000 soldiers who are part of a United Nations stabilisation team. The Indian Army contingent had lost three men after its camp was overrun in the ongoing ethnic strife. In an earlier ambush in April last year, four Indian soldiers and an officer were shot dead in an ambush.

The Indian Army contingent had to be evacuated by air and the situation is considered so delicate that New Delhi has sent back a senior army officer to serve an unusual second term as the

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

deputy chief of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) because of his knowledge of the land.

India as one of the three biggest contributors of soldiers to U.N. peacekeeping missions has been unhappy about not being consulted on some of the ways in which operations are now being carried out. India, along with some other nations, has also urged the U.N. Security Council to take steps for going after people responsible for the killing of their troops.

But India's interests are also political and economic and their furtherance depends on peaceful ties not only within South Sudan but stable ties with Sudan from which it was carved out in 2011. Indian companies have 25 per cent stake in a South Sudan oil company whose crude is sent across Sudan by an India-built pipeline.

In Africa, the two Sudans have the third largest crude reserves and India appointed a Special Envoy for South Sudan even as its independence was being negotiated. It was among the earliest to open a consulate in Juba, four years before it formally became the national capital. Both Sudans are keen on Indian assistance and expertise in infrastructure development and capacity building and a wider footprint by its corporates.

▷ BHASKAR PANEL MOOTS MORE POWERS FOR RBI IN FINANCIAL BENCHMARKS

A Committee on Financial Benchmarks, headed by Reserve Bank of India Executive Director P. Vijaya Bhaskar, has suggested increased role for the apex bank for the oversight of the benchmark setting process. The committee has recommended a change in the way of determining the money market benchmarks so as to remove any possible scope for manipulation.

The draft report has recommended that the overnight Mumbai Inter-bank Bid Rate-Mumbai Inter-bank Offered Rate (Mibid-Mibor) fixing be based on "the volume-based weighted average of traded rates from 9 to 10 in the morning."

That would move pricing away from the current polling method, which is based on a poll of trader submissions.

The committee has also recommended basing the government securities yield curve, including for illiquid debt, on the basis of volume-based weighted average rates instead of last traded yields.

The committee has also proposed banks set pricing for state development bonds at a spread based on the last two auctions, instead of calculating those bond yields at a fixed spread of 25 basis points over government debt.

The report provides an in-depth analysis of the existing benchmark-setting methodology and governance framework of the major rupee interest rate and foreign exchange benchmarks. While finding the existing system to be generally satisfactory, the report, however, has recommended several measures/principles to be followed to strengthen the benchmark quality, setting methodology and governance framework of the benchmark administrators, calculation agents and submitters.

The objective is to explicitly empower the RBI to determine policy with regard to benchmarks used in money, G-sec, credit and foreign exchange markets in India, and also to issue binding directions to all the agencies involved in the benchmark-setting. Although there is no specific provision in the RBI Act for the regulation of financial benchmarks, the committee is of the view that "a broader interpretation of Section 45W of the RBI Act empowers the RBI to issue direction to the benchmark administrators."

The committee feels that the RBI could entrust the administration functions of the rupee interest rate and foreign exchange benchmarks to the Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association (FIMMDA) and the Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India (FEDAI), respectively. In the committee's view, "the RBI may bring the benchmark submission system of banks and primary dealers under its on-site supervision and off-site monitoring." It has also favoured the setting up of an internal expert group to conduct periodic on-site inspection of the benchmark administrators and calculation agents, and also monitor their activities through an off-site monitoring system.

The committee was set up in the aftermath of revelations regarding manipulations of several key global benchmark rates, namely, LIBOR, EURIBOR

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

4

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

and TIBOR. It was set up on June 28, 2013, with a mandate to study various issues relating to financial benchmarks in India, and to submit the report by December 31, 2013.

▷ CCEA NOD FOR ADDITIONAL FOOD GRAINS TO STATES

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its nod for additional allocation of food grains to States — subject to availability in the central pool — at the prevailing minimum support price. In addition to the entitlement of States under the National Food Security Act, the Centre, from time to time, makes available non-Public Distribution System food grains for festival seasons or during a calamity. Earlier, this allocation used to be at the economic cost.

The support price for wheat for the 2013-14 marketing season is Rs. 13.50 paise per kilogram as against the economic cost of Rs. 20.00 per kg.

As against the economic cost of Rs. 26.00 per kg, the support price of common variety rice for 2012-13 is Rs. 12.50 paise per kg while for Grade 'A' it is Rs. 12.80 paise per kg.

Consequently, the CCEA approved the revision in prices of food grains allocated to Uttarakhand for flood relief from economic cost to the minimum support price.

▷ INS VIKRAMADITYA ENTERS INDIAN NAVY'S AREA OF OPERATION

India's newest aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya entered the Indian Navy's area of operation in north western Arabian Sea, accompanied by three other vessels, it was rendezvoused — in Naval parlance RVed — with the Western Fleet that had gone all the way from Mumbai to receive it.

INS Vikramaditya, which was accompanied by INS Trikand, which is a Talwar class frigate, INS Delhi which is a Delhi class destroyer and INS Deepak, the fleet tanker, fired ceremonial guns to salute the flag of the fleet commander Rear Admiral Anand Chawla, who was leading the flotilla of the Western Fleet, that also comprised aircraft carrier INS Viraat.

The other ships besides INS Viraat which had gone to receive INS Vikramaditya included two Delhi

class destroyers, three Trishul class stealth frigates, a Godavari class frigate and a couple of offshore vessels.

INS Vikramaditya, which was commissioned into the Indian Navy on November 16 last at the North Russian shipyard of Sevmas at Severodvinsk, is now headed for its home port at Karwar in Karnataka where it is scheduled to reach in a week's time. On reaching Karwar, the aircraft carrier would re-equip and prepare and get ready for the next phase which would be its integration with the air wing, comprising about 30 Mig 29K aircraft and six Kamov Ka-31 "Helix" reconnaissance and anti-submarine helicopters.

It would take around four to six months for the full integration of the aircraft carrier after which it will become the spearhead of the carrier battle group. During this period, the aircraft carrier would also be equipped with surface-to-air missile (SAM) and close-in weapon system (CIWS) to safeguard it from aerial attack.

While a batch of combat fliers from 'Black Panther' squadron has undertaken simulator training in Moscow, before the flying operations from the carrier deck, they are also scheduled to perfect take-off and landing on the shore-based test facility (SBTF) at INS Hansa in Goa.

▷ KERALA SEEKS REVIEW OF GHATS ORDER, LPG NORMS

Kerala has submitted a 12-point memorandum to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh urging the Centre to exclude plantations, agricultural settlements, and human settlements with population density higher than 100 persons a square kilometre from areas to be categorised as ecologically sensitive.

In the memorandum submitted, the State also sought six months to complete transit to the Direct Benefit Transfer for LPG Consumers (DBTL) scheme, early commissioning of the Palakkad coach factory, grant of exemption to the upcoming Vizhinjam Seaport from cabotage law and approval for the Thiruvananthapuram-Chengannur suburban railway project. The memorandum also urged the Centre to take over the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute at Palode, near here.

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

▷ GSVL-D5 LAUNCH PLACES INDIA IN ELITE LEAGUE

Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSVL-D5), powered by an indigenous cryogenic engine, effortlessly put the 1,982-kg GSAT-14 communication satellite into a perfect orbit after 17 minutes of flight.

The cryogenic engine built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) fired for 12 of those 17 minutes.

The precision of the cryogenic upper stage was such that it put the GSAT-14 into an orbit with a perigee of 179 km, against the target of 180 km, and the apogee achieved was off by a mere 50 km for a target of 36,000 km.

The grand success caps 20 years of hard work by ISRO's engineers, after being denied cryogenic technology under pressure from the U.S., suffering a heartbreaking failure with an indigenous cryogenic engine flight in April 2010 and having had to scrub its second attempt with an indigenous cryogenic engine in August 2013. "I am proud to say that ISRO has done it..." ISRO Chairman K. Radhakrishnan announced.

The mission's success means India now has the ability to put satellites weighing more than two tonnes in orbit, joining the elite club of the U.S., Russia, France, Japan and China who have mastered this perilous technology of using cryogenic propellants — liquid oxygen at minus 183 degrees Celsius and liquid hydrogen at minus 253 degrees Celsius.

▷ REGION NEAR INDO-TIBETAN BORDER TO BE DECLARED FOSSIL NATIONAL PARK

The management plan of the Pithoragarh Forest Division for 2011 to 2021 has proposed that the Laphthal region be declared a Fossil National Park. The region is close to the Indo-Tibetan border. Some part of it lies in Pithoragarh district and the rest in Chamoli district.

The proposal is to conserve fossils and the rare and endangered flora and fauna. This will also prevent cross-border illegal trade and poaching in fossils, flora and fauna. Once the mapping is over, the Fossil National Park would be spread across an area

measuring 500 to 1,000 sq-km, most of which lies 4,500 metres above mean sea level. The area is the exposed bed of an ancient sea, which disappeared during the formation of the Himalayas.

The area has sparse vegetation. Several swamps and pools in the area are home to various species of flora and fauna. Snow leopard, musk deer, Tibetan wild ass, woolly hare, and Tibetan wolf are among the species found in the region.

The region being close to the international border is guarded by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve administration.

▷ ONE NATION, ONE GRID

The integration of the southern power grid with the national grid fulfils a long-felt need of consumers and state electricity utilities in the South. The integration was achieved when the Power Grid Corporation of India commissioned a 765-kilovolt transmission line between Raichur and Solapur on New Year's Day, five months ahead of schedule. The southern grid is the third largest in terms of power consumption amongst the five regional grids and is perennially starved of power. With a base energy deficit of 7.7 per cent that shoots up to 12.5 per cent during peak hours (as per latest data from the Central Electricity Authority), the southern grid has been hamstrung by inadequate generation capacity. The absence of synchronous connectivity with the national grid meant that the southern states could not take advantage of surplus power available in other regions. Currently, the southern grid has asynchronous connections with the other grids that enable transmission of high voltage direct current. But this is a cumbersome and inefficient way to transmit power and the capacity is limited. The completion of the commissioning process of the Raichur-Solapur line will synchronise the southern grid with the others in a single frequency and allow seamless transmission across the country; it will be a truly 'one-nation-one-grid' that will have 232 giga watts of installed capacity at its disposal.

To be sure, there are still technical procedures to be completed before the line becomes operational in the next few months but there is little doubt that it will help balance the power situation across the

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

6

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

country. The southern states can now purchase power from the other regions to manage their deficit, but more important is the nationwide electricity market that will now come into being. There is a large disparity in traded short-term electricity prices between the south and the other regions due to the absence of transmission links. During the summer, for instance, traded electricity prices in the South are typically twice or even thrice the levels that prevail in the other regions. Hopefully, such disparities will now be a thing of the past. The responsibilities of the regulators and grid managers are now that much higher with the entire country united in a single grid. Lapses such as those that caused the western and northern grids to collapse on two consecutive days in July 2012 can lead to disastrous consequences in a unified grid. The regulators also need to keep an eye out on power exchanges and traders as their market expands with the entry of the southern grid and its eternally power-starved utilities. If integrating the country into a single grid was a challenge, then that will be rivalled by the task of efficiently managing it.

P RURAL SANITATION WORKS INCLUDED UNDER MGNREGS

India is the world's largest open air lavatory with over 620 million people practising open defecation in the country. Seeking to address this persisting problem, the UPA government has widened the scope of its flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to include works relating to rural sanitation in collaboration with the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan (NBA) Scheme.

This interlinking is aimed at strengthening the base of rural livelihood and creates durable assets in rural areas and infrastructure at a village level. More specifically, it shall accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas to provide privacy and dignity particularly to women.

"As per the Para 4 (1) IV (i) of the Schedule-I of the MGNREG Act..., taking up rural sanitation related works, such as, individual household latrines, school toilets, Anganwadi toilets can be taken up either independently or in convergence with schemes of other Government Departments to achieve "open defecation free status," stated an official Ministry of

Rural Development NREGA Division circular.

The amendment made to the existing guidelines incorporates various changes including Individual Household latrine (IHHL) works can be taken up either under NBA or independently under MGNREGS, as per the choice of the beneficiary.

Additionally, the guidelines specifically mention where IHHLs are taken up independently under MGNREGS, "the payment shall be based on the actual value of work done, subject to the overall outflow from MGNREGS funds limited to Rs. 10,000 per IHHL including the wage rate and material cost. Any expenditure over and above this amount shall be there beneficiary contribution".

The design and specifications shall continue to be laid down by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Further, the data of such IHHLs shall be shared with implementing agencies to ensure "no further incentive is paid from NBA funds". This will demarcate toilets taken up under NBA in convergence with MGNREGS and independently of the scheme.

P PRITHVI-II TEST-FIRED, COVERS FULL RANGE

The Strategic Forces Command test-fired Prithvi-II, a surface-to-surface strategic missile, from a mobile launcher in the Integrated Test Range, near Chandipur, in Odisha on Tuesday.

The missile, which can carry a nuclear warhead of 500 kg, lifted off at 9.50 a.m. and covered its full range of 350 km. Informed sources called the trial "a routine one" and pointed out that the Army had already deployed the missile, which was developed to succeed Prithvi-I, a tactical missile which has been phased out. The naval version of the Prithvi-II is Dhanush, which can carry a nuclear warhead of 500 kg over 250 km.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation, which developed both Prithvi-II and Dhanush, plans to test-fire the surface-to-surface Agni-IV, another strategic missile with a range of 4,000 km, from the Wheeler Island, off the Odisha coast, on January 20. The Agni-IV, capable of carrying a one-tonne nuclear warhead, has proved to be successful twice so far.

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

▷ HUMANITARIAN CRISIS MOUNTS AS S.SUDAN FIGHTING CONTINUES

Protracted fighting in South Sudan could result in a humanitarian catastrophe, international agencies warned, as peace talks in the Ethiopian capital failed to quell internecine hostilities that have plunged the world's youngest nation into crisis.

Approximately two lakh people have been displaced thus far, a number that the U.N. warns could double to four lakh if the fighting continues. More than 1000 people have been killed since South Sudan President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy, Riek Machar of attempting to overthrow the government. Mr. Kiir's government has since imprisoned 11 politicians including Mr. Machar, even as militias loyal to the opposing factions have clashed repeatedly. India has significant economic interests in Sudan and South Sudan. State-owned ONGC Videsh (OVL), a subsidiary of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd, the China National Petroleum Corporation and Petronas, of Malaysia, are the primary players in South Sudan's oil sector.

OVL has also financed and constructed a 741 km pipeline from the Khartoum refinery in Sudan to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

An Indian delegation is currently in Juba, assessing the situation on the ground. A contingent of 2,200 Indian Army Personnel are currently deployed as peacekeepers with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

▷ ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY SOFTENS STAND

Several project proposals which were taken off the list for forest clearance as they fell within wildlife zones or were awaiting comprehensive assessment will be considered afresh by the Forest Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forests in January.

The proposals include exploration for coal in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, in zones that were earlier identified by the ministry as being part of a wildlife corridor. There is also a proposal to permit iron ore excavation in Saranda, Jharkhand, where permission for mining was blocked after the area had been identified as an elephant reserve.

Yet another proposal is for the 700 MW Tato-II Hydroelectric Project on the Siyom in Arunachal Pradesh without a cumulative assessment study the ministry earlier mandated for the river basin.

The Forest Advisory Committee is the statutory authority under the Forest Conservation Act. It is headed by the seniormost forest officer, Director-General of Forests, and comprises several senior forest officials and some non-official experts. All proposals for forest clearance are assessed by this committee, and the Environment Minister takes the final call on the projects based on its reviews. Rarely does the Minister go against the committee's views and the listing of projects on the agenda for the panel is done with the Minister's knowledge.

The proposals in Singrauli include exploration for coal in the Dongri Taal, Patpahariya, Marki-Barka East and Marki-Barka West blocks. They are in close proximity to the Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve. The blocks were earlier earmarked by the Ministry as falling within areas with tigers. Even a 'refined' study by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) concluded that two of these were important for tiger conservation. The NTCA noted that they fell within the zone that should be declared an ecologically sensitive area.

Iron mining in the Saranda forests is proposed in what was notified as the Singhbhum elephant reserve. In 2010, while permitting some public sector undertakings to mine at one end of the reserve, the Ministry ruled that no other mining leases be permitted in the Saranda forests, but has gone back on its decision.

At the same time, the Centre has dithered for several years on greater protection to elephant reserves and on establishing a conservation authority, which was recommended by a committee on the lines of the NTCA. Empowering the authority with legal mandate would make it difficult for projects to be sanctioned in elephant reserves.

Tato-II project appraisal was earlier put on the back burner after the committee sought a cumulative assessment of all projects planned in the river basin. But after hectic discussions between the Environment and Power Ministries and after the Cabinet Committee on Investments considered the

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

8

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

issue, the FAC is set to discuss the plan again without the assessment.

It claims that this is the first project in the river basin that has come up for forest clearance and so it can be taken up for approval without cumulative assessment. But the Ministry gave environment clearance in 2005 for another project on the same river basin downstream.

▷ KELKAR PANEL FOR RETAINING PRODUCTION SHARING MODEL FOR NELP X

Even as the Petroleum Ministry is bracing up to showcase nearly 56 new oil and gas blocks during the forthcoming Petrotech 2014 conference under the new revenue sharing regime, the Vijay Kelkar Committee has favoured retaining the production sharing contract (PSC) system for the oil and gas exploration sector in the country.

The Ministry has proposed to put before national and international delegates the profile of these oil and gas blocks likely to be auctioned under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) round X. Although, the government has stated that it will issue the notice of bids under the revenue sharing regime next month only after the Cabinet grants its approval, the Kelkar Committee report is likely to further create confusion.

The Kelkar Committee, sources in the Ministry said, had favoured the production sharing model for deep sea exploration because guarantees for the recovery of all sunk costs were important to attract oil majors with proprietary technology. Under the present regime, oil companies can recover all costs — of successful and unsuccessful wells — from sales of oil and gas before sharing profit with the government.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) had criticised the PSC regime on grounds that it encouraged companies to increase capital expenditure and delay the government's share. The Rangarajan panel had last year suggested moving to a revenue sharing regime that required companies to state upfront the quantum of oil or gas they would share with the government from the first day of production.

The Kelkar panel, it is learnt, favours the revenue sharing model for shallow and on-land blocks

that are less cost-intensive than deep sea exploration. It also reportedly calls for moving to an open acreage regime where companies can pick exploration areas through the year rather than wait for periodic auctions that offer areas identified by the government. To facilitate this, the panel has called for setting up a National Data Repository (NDR) that will preserve and promote the country's natural resources data. It suggested administering PSCs without any changes and strengthening the DGH for better administration.

▷ INDIA READY FOR GENEVA MEET ON SYRIA

In preparation for the Geneva II Conference, India sent its point man for West Asia, Sandeep Kumar, to Syria. The aim was to get a firsthand assessment of the developments, official sources said.

Besides meeting a variety of official and government representatives, Mr. Kumar, Joint Secretary (West Asia and North America) in the Ministry of External Affairs, met Hassan Abdul Azim, head of the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change, the main Opposition within Syria.

The visit also helped in assessing the ongoing destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and fashioning a holistic approach to the ground situation in the country, said the officials. "With the United Nations formally dispatching invitations to various countries, including India, South Block is ready with its homework all done," they said.

India's desire to participate in the international meeting was backed by Russia when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Moscow last October. Since then, New Delhi has been putting in place building blocks that would make it a useful participant at the Geneva meeting.

India has already offered \$1 million for use in destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and related facilities by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It has also offered the services of its experts in the destruction and verification activities and training for personnel participating in the destruction. As opposed to the U.S. and Russia, India has completed destruction of its chemical weapons.

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

The U.N. finalised the list of attendees for Geneva-II. The first meeting had produced the Geneva Communiqué that backed a political transition without seeking the ouster of President Bashar-al Assad. India had a brief tryst with the Opposition in Syria during its participation as an observer in the West-backed Friends of Syria grouping, which had unsuccessfully tried to push for regime change.

However, for the present, South Block is keenly watching the January 13 meeting in Paris between Mr. Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, which will also take up the issue of Iran's participation.

Iran has objected to Mr. Kerry suggesting that it play a constructive role from the sidelines. The official Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham as saying Tehran was ready to participate in the conference but would accept only offers "that preserve the honour of the Islamic republic."

▷ JAPAN WANTS INDIA'S SUPPORT ON DISPUTES WITH CHINA

Engaged in a territorial dispute with China, Japan sought to rope in India's support over "the recent Chinese provocative actions" saying a message needs to be sent to it collectively that status quo cannot be changed by force.

Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera said dialogue is the only way to resolve the row created by imposition of restrictions by China in the East China Sea and other areas.

"For both India and Japan, China is an important neighbouring country. Both countries have important economic linkages with China. However, after the recent Chinese provocative actions, entire international community will have to send a message to China," he told.

The security situation in the region against the backdrop of recent tensions between Japan and China triggered by imposition of 'Air Defence Identification Zone' (ADIZ) over East China Sea and other areas by China came up during talks between Mr. Onodera and his Indian counterpart A.K. Antony.

After the ADIZ started creating tensions in

the South East Asian region, India had stated that the issue should be resolved between the concerned parties through dialogue in a peaceful way and it was against use of force to resolve the matters.

About an earlier proposal by Tokyo for forming a trilateral grouping of India, Japan and the U.S. to deal with challenges from China, Mr. Onodera said, "India and Japan have good ties with the U.S. Economically and internationally and in terms of military forces, these are big countries."

The two sides have agreed on cooperation in Peacekeeping Operations between their respective agencies along with cooperation between the Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces and the Indian Army, he said.

The two countries have also decided to conduct staff exchanges and discuss possibility of conducting staff talks between Japan Air Self-Defence Force and Indian Air Force and professional exchanges of test-pilots, professional exchanges in the field of flight safety and between their transport squadrons.

▷ INDIA RANKS BELOW PAKISTAN IN N-SECURITY INDEX

India has been ranked below its two nuclear-armed neighbours — Pakistan and China — in the list of countries with a weak nuclear material security in the world, according to a U.S.-based think-tank.

In the 2014 Nuclear Threat Initiative's Nuclear Materials Security Index released on Wednesday, India has been ranked 23rd out of 25 countries with weapons-usable nuclear materials.

India received 41 out of 100 points, which is improvement by one point from the 2012 score.

For comparison, China received 64 points and has been ranked at 20th spot, while Pakistan with 46 points stands at 22nd place. The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) said this improvement reflects India's first contribution to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. "Overall, however, India's score remains low".

This is due to a number of factors, including weak regulations that are written as guidance rather than as requirements; increasing quantities of weapons-usable nuclear materials for both civilian and military use and gaps in its regulatory structure such as a lack of an independent regulatory agency.

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

10

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

External risk factors, such as high levels of corruption, which undermine confidence in implementation or enforcement of security measures and also increase the risk that officials may contribute (even unwittingly) to the theft of nuclear material are also among the factors, it added.

Both India and China improved their scores since 2012 by one point by contributing to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, which supports the implementation of nuclear security activities, the report said. In comparing both countries, India scored higher than China on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540 related to nuclear security issues.

China, however, scored higher in a number of areas, including: the existence of an independent regulatory agency; having invited a peer review of its nuclear security arrangements; and having strong regulations for control and accounting of materials.

Pakistan received 46 out of 100 possible points compared to India's 41, the report said, adding that both countries improved their scores since 2012.

Pakistan improved its score by publishing new regulations for the physical protection of nuclear facilities. In comparing both countries, India scored higher than Pakistan on international legal commitments because India has adopted all of the relevant treaties whereas Pakistan has not.

NTI said India scored at the top for international legal commitments, having signed and ratified the Conventional on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and its 2005 Amendment, as well as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. India also received the highest possible score for implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540. NTI recommended that India's nuclear materials security conditions could be improved by strengthening its laws and regulations for mitigating the insider threat, for the control and accounting of nuclear materials, and for the physical security of materials during transport.

JAPAN FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST NOVARTIS OVER DIOVAN

Japan's Health Ministry has filed a criminal complaint against Novartis Pharma, alleging

exaggerated advertising for the heart condition and blood-pressure lowering drug Diovan. Novartis Pharma K.K., the local unit of Swiss pharmaceutical group Novartis AG, issued an apology on Thursday for "troubles and concerns" over the advertising.

The ads cited clinical studies conducted in Japan that included false data. The Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry said in a notice it suspects Novartis continued using ads citing the studies after learning data in them had been manipulated. Novartis has denied it was aware of the problem, and says studies have confirmed the safety and effectiveness of the drug. Diovan, also known as valsartan, is sold around the world.

NO REAL WINNERS IN BANGLADESH ELECTIONS

The elections in Bangladesh went off predictably — amid a boycott by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its 18 smaller allies, lots of violence, loss of life and property, and a victory for the Awami League. As many as 30 people died on the election weekend, and on voting day activists and supporters of the boycotting parties went about burning polling booths. The Election Commission says the turnout was just less than 40 per cent, a figure hotly contested by the Opposition which put it at a quarter of that. In any case it was nowhere close to the nearly 80 per cent turnout in 2008 — the highest in Bangladesh — that gave Sheikh Hasina a landslide victory. This time, the Awami League was assured of victory even before a single vote was cast — it faced no contest in half of the 300 parliamentary seats due to the boycott. In the remaining ones, the party faced opposition from its own dissidents, and won 110, thus obtaining an absolute majority. Although Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared her satisfaction with the turnout, and asked law enforcing authorities to quell the continuing unrest with an "iron hand", she must know that questions about the credibility of this election will not easily vanish. In a nation that has worked hard to build some of the best social indicators in South Asia — Bangladesh has cut ahead of India on reducing poverty and malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality rates and gender disparities — such unending political and civil strife can only undermine the gains of the last few years.

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

UPSC PORTAL
www.upscportal.com

Online Test Series For



IAS

PRE GENERAL STUDIES



100% IAS Exam Syllabus Covered

at just ₹100 per Test

All India Ranking immediately after the test

Detailed Explanation after the Test

Take Test any Time any Day

Register Now

**For any query Call
011-45151781, 011-65023618**

www.upscportal.com/test-series

Click Here for Full Information:

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/test-series/online-ias-pre>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

The Bangladesh Prime Minister has rejected calls, including by the United States, for dialogue with the Opposition and fresh elections. She has declared that talks with the Opposition can be held only when the BNP ends “violence and terrorism” and severs its alliance with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami. But a mid-term election may become a necessity if the political chaos does not abate. It is time the Awami League realised that while its fight against Islamism is a good fight, it simply cannot be won by polarising the nation politically. It will take two, though. BNP leader Khaleda Zia needs to discover better alternatives to expressing political differences than holding the country ransom to street violence and thuggery. As for her dalliance with Islamism, she has Pakistan’s example to see what opportunistic alliances with religious extremism can do to a country. New Delhi’s description of the elections as a “constitutional requirement” that Prime Minister Hasina has fulfilled, is too nuanced to serve any useful purpose; in fact, it only makes it seem partisan. If India really wants to help progressive and liberal forces in Bangladesh, it must use its cordial ties with the Awami League to work at breaking the deadlock.

▷ POSCO CLEARED, VEDANTA LOSES BID FOR NIYAMGIRI PROJECT

The Union Environment Ministry has taken a decision in two high profile cases, rejecting the forest clearance for Vedanta’s bauxite mining project in Niyamgiri Hills of Odisha, and renewing the stand-alone environmental clearance for Posco’s eight million tonnes per annum steel plant.

The rejection of Vedanta’s proposal to dig in the Niyamgiri hills came after 12 village councils of Dongriya Kondh tribal groups rejected the project in their traditional forestlands.

The Supreme Court had empowered the village councils to decide on the project in order to protect their customary and religious rights.

The court had asked the Environment Ministry to review its earlier decision to not permit the mining, based on the views of the tribal community. The renewal of original clearance given to Posco’s steel plant in 2007 by Environment Minister Veerappa Moily, on the other hand, came after the

Ministry delinked other components of the integrated project, including the port and the mining parts from its review process.

The Ministry was asked by the National Green Tribunal to review the environment clearance.

▷ CABINET CLEARS REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR TV RATING AGENCIES

The Union Cabinet cleared a comprehensive regulatory framework proposed by the Information & Broadcasting Ministry (I&B) for television rating agencies that includes procedures for registration, eligibility norms, limits on cross-holdings, methodology for audience measurement, sale and use of ratings and a complaint redress mechanism.

The issue has been under review for several years now with questions being asked about the accuracy of Television Rating Points (TRPs) on the basis of which the visual media seeks advertisements and their rates.

As per the new guidelines, which come into effect from the date of notification, all rating agencies, including the existing ones, will have to obtain registration from the I&B Ministry.

No single company or legal entity can either directly, or through its associates/interconnect undertakings, have substantial equity holding (10 per cent or more of paid-up equity) in both rating agencies and broadcasters/advertisers/advertising agencies.

Further, ratings have to be technology-neutral and should capture data across multiple viewing platforms including cable television, direct-to-home television and terrestrial television. The guidelines also stipulate sample size for rating. To begin with, six months from the date of notification the minimum panel size should be 20,000. Thereafter, the panel size has to increase by 10,000 annually till it reaches 50,000. Secrecy and privacy of the panel homes has to be maintained.

Besides an effective complaint redress system with a toll free number, the rating companies have to set up an internal audit mechanism to get its entire methodology audited internally on a quarterly-basis and through an independent auditor annually. And, all audit reports have to be put on the website of the rating agency with the government

Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

12

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

and the TRAI reserving the right to audit their systems and procedures.

There are also punitive provisions, including cancellation of registration and forfeiture of bank guarantees up to Rs. 1 crore, in the case of non-compliance.

▷ MISSION TO CUT NEONATAL DEATHS

Goa and Manipur may have knocked Kerala off the pedestal, but at 12 deaths among children less than one year of age per 1,000 live births, Kerala still has an enviably low infant mortality rate (IMR); it is far below India's average of 42. Yet, for years, the southern State has been unable to reduce the mortality rate further to a single-digit figure to become comparable with the developed countries. Kerala has always been at the forefront in setting the benchmark for almost all the health indices. It therefore comes as no surprise that the State has initiated steps to further beat down IMR. A survey done by the National Rural Health Mission and the Indian Academy of Paediatrics found that about 75 per cent of infant deaths occurred during the first four weeks of birth (or neonatal deaths). The first week alone accounted for 59 per cent of the total neonatal deaths. Hence a pilot project is set to begin in 25 hospitals, including five private hospitals, to lower the neonatal mortality rate by 30 per cent in 24 months. It is planning a targeted approach to tackle the four major causal factors — prematurity, congenital anomalies, sepsis and birth asphyxia — for neonatal deaths.

Pre-term births (between 24 and 37 weeks of gestation) combined with low birth weight account for the lion's share of about 35 per cent of neonatal mortality in Kerala. India has the highest number — 3.5 million — of pre-term births in the world, according to a June 2012 paper in *The Lancet*. Though the causes for pre-term births cannot be ascertained in a vast majority of cases, it is still possible to identify using techniques like ultrasound a certain percentage of mothers who are very likely to deliver such babies. Aside from improving the nutritional status of pregnant mothers, and keeping their blood pressure and diabetes under check, delaying pre-term labour through medical

intervention and administration of two doses of steroid before delivery greatly improve neonatal survival. The steroid improves the three major parameters that are essential for survival — lung maturity, preventing haemorrhage of brain blood vessels and avoiding intestinal problems due to immaturity. While sterile hospital conditions can prevent sepsis (9.3 per cent), the importance of the mothers' genital hygiene is often missed or overlooked. Vaginal and urinary tract infections are quite likely to cause pre-term labour and sepsis. Mortality due to birth asphyxia in Kerala is 8 per cent. Improving the quality of care during the delivery process, including by preventing prolonged labour, can further cut birth asphyxia mortality.

▷ CONTAINING THE MAOIST THREAT

When the state responds to political violence in an indiscriminately heavy-handed manner, members of extremist groups will only harden their positions and hesitate to join the democratic mainstream. Whether the surrender of Maoist leader G. Venkatakrishna Prasad alias Gudsa Usendi, and his wife Santhoshi Markom, marks the beginning of a welcome new trend or is just a one-off event depends a lot on the rehabilitation of the couple who have been active with the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of the CPI-Maoist. Mr. Prasad, who was the spokesperson for the Maoists in Chhattisgarh, was wanted by the police for his direct involvement in major acts of violence, including the killing of Congress leaders in Bastar last year. Whether it was ill-health or disgust with the politics of violence that prompted him to surrender before the police in Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Prasad is entitled to the rehabilitation scheme already in place for reformed Naxalites. Governments are wont to seek the media spotlight and a bit of political triumphalism is inevitable when Maoists surrender, given the deadly and inherently anti-social nature of their activities. It is important to ensure that the reformative approach to these former extremists succeeds in transforming their mindset. Some of the Maoists return to collaborating with the extremist group, and some others spend the rest of their life in penury. A few are even hunted down by their former colleagues for being police informers and betrayers of

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

the movement. The safety of these persons who have chosen to step out of the shadow of extremist politics must be guaranteed by governments.

There are many Maoists who feel trapped in the movement and the cycle of attacks and reprisals, but who are unable to gather the courage to make the transition from the fringe to the mainstream. However, rehabilitation of lapsed militants can only be a small part of the larger strategy of containing extremist violence. The administrative response of deploying specially trained security personnel in the violence-affected areas should be accompanied by a developmental strategy to enhance livelihood opportunities in tribal and forest regions. When rural wages remain low, the youth in India's deprived interior areas can easily be lured into believing that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. If it is not to be an isolated instance, the surrender should not be projected as a vindication of harsh measures in the face of extremist threat but should prompt a reworking of the strategy of countering political violence, and the putting in place of a comprehensive, equitable development programme for India's tribal areas.

▷ SOUTH KOREA KEEN ON SETTING UP NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN INDIA

Keen to enter India's growing nuclear market, South Korea wants to build an atomic power plant here but India is not rushing into it.

The government first wants to complete the projects already initiated, including Koodankulam III and IV and Jaitapur, which are facing hurdles on various counts. However, India is willing to have cooperation with South Korea in other aspects of the nuclear field, like research. South Korea conveyed its desire to build a nuclear plant in India when a delegation from its Ministry of Science came to India recently. This was preceded by a visit of a team of Department of Atomic Energy to South Korea to discuss possible cooperation in the nuclear field in November last year.

Sources said India not very keen to have Korean nuclear reactors immediately. The DAE first wants to concentrate on existing plants and deal with the issues like liability over which many foreign collaborators have raised questions. "We would first

want to clear the impediments for projects that are already in pipeline and then move on to another projects," said a senior DAE official. Currently, all the power plants are running behind schedule.

The Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant Project (JNPP) being built with French assistance, the unit 3 and 4 of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) with Russian assistance and the Mithi Virdhi nuclear plant with the assistance of the US are either stuck because of various reasons or running behind schedule.

Senior DAE official said cost-wise South Korea is more competitive than what the US or the French are offering, but India wants to go slow on this because of the pending projects. He added that if the deal with Japan is delayed or does not happen, then Korea could be a possible partner from where it can source equipments.

Globally, South Korea ranks fifth in terms of electricity generation from nuclear power. It not only has technology, but most of it has been indigenous. Its domestic market is also increasing rapidly and is now focusing to target the global market.

It has 23 nuclear power plants which produce 20,716 MW of electricity. According to its National Energy Plan (2008-2030) it is expected to increase its electricity from nuclear share to 59 per cent by 2030.

It also intends to venture into the global market, which for all these years have been dominated by France, the US and Russia.

▷ INDIA, U.S. TO MOVE WHO RESOLUTION ON ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

India and the United States will jointly move a resolution to address violence, particularly against women and girls, at the Executive Board meeting of the World Health Organisation in Geneva.

The resolution on "The role of health sector in addressing violence, particularly against women and girls" will be supported by Belgium, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway and Zambia. The draft resolution impresses upon the WHO member-states to give priority to specific measures to stop violence.

Expressing concern over the fact that globally one in three women experience either physical or sexually-intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence at least once in their lives and that

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

14

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

violence is exacerbated during emergencies such as armed conflicts, the resolution calls upon the WHO to develop and strengthen national action plans on violence prevention and the member-states to address the issue in their national health plans and strategies while reinforcing the legal framework.

The resolution calls for resource allocation aimed at preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, which, it says, can be done by achieving gender equality, empowering women and by increasing the focus on prevention, protection and accountability in laws, policies and programmes, and their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The resolution calls upon the WHO to develop a 'Global Plan of Action' for addressing all forms of inter-personal violence, in particular against women and children, taking into account the unique role of the health sector in a multisectoral response.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is already revisiting the 'Medico-legal Examination Report on Sexual Violence and Guidelines for Medical Examination on Sexual Violence Victims', including the definition of sexual violence, health consequences and reporting for sexual violence, psycho-social support for sexual violence survivors, guidelines for interface with other agencies such as police and the judiciary.

The draft guidelines and revised pro forma of medico-legal examination basically deal with the right of victims to unhindered access to medical treatment and for better recording of medical evidence in order to get the perpetrators convicted.

The draft will bring about uniformity in medical examination and treatment of sexual assault survivors in the country.

In addition to focussing on raising public awareness of women and girl's rights, including their reproductive rights, the resolution calls for engaging men and boys, as well as families and communities, as agents of change in promoting gender equality, and preventing and condemning violence against women.

The resolution wants a Global Status Report on Violence brought out every four years, beginning 2014, which will provide a baseline measurement for countries and a tool to monitor activities relevant to

implementation of the Global Plan of Action at the country-level through data collection and monitoring legal environment and prevention programmes.

▷ **INDONESIAN**

ORE BAN LIKELY TO HURT CHINA

Indonesia's outgoing President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has taken one of his tenure's most significant economic policy decisions, by banning exports of unprocessed mineral ore. The impact of this decision will roil global industries from aluminium to steel manufacturing. Indonesia is the world's largest exporter of nickel ore, refined tin and thermal coal, and home to the fifth-largest copper mine and the top gold mine. Mineral shipments totalled \$10.4 billion in 2012 according to the World Bank. Not all minerals will be equally affected by the ban however, and certain, primarily American, mining corporations, have been granted exemptions as well. The reasoning behind the ban lies in an attempt to boost the domestic processing industries, by mandating that ores are processed locally before being exported. Despite having seen an average of 6 percent growth in recent years, Indonesia's remains a largely commodities-driven economy and policy-makers are keen to try and kick start more high-value added, local manufacturing.

However, the move has been opposed by both domestic and foreign miners resulting in lay-offs and strikes in the mining sector. Officials are also worried that a short-term cut in foreign revenue could widen the current account deficit, which could further put pressure on the already battered, rupiah, the country's currency.

Companies that build local smelters and process the ore domestically will still be allowed to export their products. However, the hundreds of small domestic miners that cannot afford to build a smelter, which can cost hundreds of millions of dollars, will be adversely impacted.

New regulation

President Yudhoyono has now signed a regulation that waters down the export ban somewhat, largely to accommodate the demands of American mining giant Freeport.

Freeport, which holds a 73 percent market

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

share in Indonesia's copper production, warned last month that unless the ban was revised, it would reduce output at one of its mines by 60 percent and also be forced to lay off half of its 15,000 Indonesian employees. Under the regulation, Freeport and Newmont Mining, would still be allowed to export copper, manganese, lead, zinc and iron ore concentrate until 2017, by when they must build smelters to process the ore locally. But nickel ore and bauxite exports worth more than \$2 billion annually will be banned.

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The decision of the Ministry of Environment and Forests to revalidate the environmental clearance issued to South Korean steelmaker Posco for the proposed steel plant in Odisha is based on a piecemeal approach, rather than a comprehensive and cumulative assessment of all parts of the project. It cannot claim to rely on sound judgment. What distinguishes the proposal from the welter of projects before the Ministry is its major Foreign Direct Investment potential, estimated at more than Rs.50,000 crore. There is little doubt that it will take massive investments to pull the masses out of deep poverty, and new industries are vital to achieving this goal. Significant expansion of the economy has taken place over the past two decades, creating much wealth. Unfortunately, this has also coincided with grossly uneven distribution of negative externalities. In the case of Posco, the acquisition of land has been a contentious issue, evoking strong protest from local communities which remain unconvinced about the benefits. Evidently, neither the project proponent nor the Odisha government has come up with persuasive arguments over the past eight years on why villagers should part with their land when their livelihood is linked to it. Moreover, there is no effort to reach a consensus on the renewal of environmental clearance, now for a production capacity of eight million tonnes per annum, even with conditionalities that include spending on 'social commitments' by Posco.

Grant of environmental clearance for the steel plant addresses only one of many components of the Posco project — mines, a port, railway lines and a

housing facility that are integral to the functioning of the steel plant have been delinked. That point has already been made by the National Green Tribunal, which had recommended to the Centre that it consider the cumulative impact, and the concerns expressed by review committees set up to evaluate it. If the Ministry's decisions must carry credibility, it must provide a detailed report on how these suggestions have been complied with. In the case of the equally high-profile Vedanta bauxite mining project in Niyangiri in Odisha, the Ministry has deferred to the sentiments of the tribal residents and rejected the bid. Appropriating natural resources for development remains a contentious issue in a populous country where land is scarce and rehabilitation systems are weak. It has to be done selectively, and only after careful study of the impacts by credentialed specialists. There is little scope in a democracy to override public opinion, and impose unpopular decisions. It is also misleading to cast environmental safeguards and development as conflicting imperatives when they are vitally interlinked.

INDIA SEEKS

KUWAIT INVESTMENT IN LNG TERMINALS

With Petrotech 2014 conference activity being ground for pursuing oil diplomacy, India has urged Kuwait to invest in the upcoming LNG terminals in the Western and Eastern coasts in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Mangalore, and Pudur in Karnataka.

This offer was made by Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Veraappa Moily to a visiting Kuwaiti delegation led by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) head Nizar al-Adsani — who is taking part in the conference which showed interest in investing in upstream and downstream projects in India. Mr. Moily impressed upon the KPC delegation that India was making huge investments in setting up around a dozen-odd LNG terminals and it would certainly look towards investments by Kuwait in them.

Officials at the conference said KPC had expressed interest in buying 26 per cent stake in State-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGCs) Rs. 21,396 crore petrochemical plant at Dahej, Gujarat as well as another project in

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

16

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

Mangalore. Both ONGC and KPC signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to jointly work in the hydrocarbon sector.

ONGC holds 26 per cent stake in ONGC Petro-additions Ltd. — the special purpose vehicle (SPV) formed for setting up the chemical complex at the Dahej special economic zone (SEZ). Five per cent stake is with the Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC) and State-run GAIL India has 15.5 per cent. The remaining 53.5 per cent equity valued at Rs. 3,434.05 crore is yet to be formalised. Kuwait is also eyeing a stake in ONGCs petrochemical plant coming up at Mangalore and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited's (BPCL) proposed chemical unit at Kochi in Kerala.

Mr. Moily also held bilateral talks with Azerbaijan's Minister for Energy Natig Aliyev and flagged Indian companies' interest in taking oil and gas exploration and production as well as refinery projects in the Central Asian nation.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Limited (OVL) had last year bought a stake in the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oilfields as well as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which was supported by Azerbaijan. The South-Western Asian nation is now keen to get Indian participation in more producing assets. Mr. Moily also raised the issue of Indian companies including state-run Indian Oil Corporation finding it difficult to buy

▷ SOUTH KOREA FOR REOPENING CEPA WITH INDIA

While expressing satisfaction over assurances given by India on the multi-billion dollar Posco project, South Korean President Park Geun-hye called for the reopening of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), one of the earliest of this kind India signed with any country.

Underlining the need to negotiate CEPA "with authenticity", Ms. Park pointed out that since its operationalisation, trade in volume terms has increased by 70 per cent but its content does not match with that of other FTAs. The South Korean President felt there was enough potential to raise the level of trade and investment and suggested liberalisation of the visa regime, a proposal that has already been accepted in-principle by New Delhi.

The dissatisfaction expressed by Ms. Park on CEPA mirrors the reservations Japan has on a similar pact signed with India. The India-Japan CEPA was signed about a year after the Korean version and Tokyo believes it is yet to pay dividends. Ms. Park said environment clearance to the dollars 9 billions Posco project will encourage other major Korean Chaebols to invest in the country. "When the Posco project in Orissa kicks off on full scale, it would inspire other large conglomerates in Korea to channelise investible funds into India," she noted while speaking to leading Indian industrialists from all the three chambers of commerce and industry.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma pointed out that India had put in place single window approval mechanisms and suggested South Korean investments in upcoming industrial townships and explore manufacturing opportunities.

▷ INDIA TO SEEK ENHANCED CRUDE OIL, LPG SUPPLIES FROM SAUDI ARABIA

Apart from seeking enhanced crude oil and LPG supplies from Saudi Arabia, India will showcase major investment opportunities to the Arab Kingdom and its companies, including offering stake in IOC's LNG project at Ennore in Tamil Nadu, Kochi Petrochemical Project of BPCL, Opal Petrochemical project at Dahej in Gujarat during the Joint Commission Meeting to be held later this month in Riyadh.

At present, India imports on an average around 700,000 barrels per day of crude oil from Saudi Arabia and is seeking to increase that quantity. Major Saudi companies like Kingdom Holding, Saudi Arabia Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) and National Industrialisation Company (NIC), the petrochemical holding arm of the Kingdom Holding Company would be offered attractive investment opportunities, including that in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor project.

India is likely to furnish a list of projects for Saudi investments, including IOC's 5 mmtpa LNG import and re-gasification terminal at Ennore. IOC is already looking for potential strategic partners for participation in the project on mutually beneficial business terms. Similarly, Bharat Petroleum

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Corporation Limited (BPCL) proposes to set up petrochemical project at Kochi in Kerala in joint venture and is looking for an established global petrochem partner with an investment of around \$1.4 billion. The other project that is likely to be offered to Riyadh would be the ONGC Petro additions Limited (OPaL) petrochemical complex at Dahej. The project is being implemented through a joint venture promoted by ONGC along with GAIL and GSPC. OPaL is looking for a strategic investor for this project.

▷ EASING TENSIONS IN THE PALK BAY

The agreement between India and Sri Lanka to empty their jails of each other's fishermen is an encouraging sign that both sides have the will to resolve a long-standing irritant in bilateral ties. At Wednesday's meeting between Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and Sri Lankan Fisheries and Aquatic Minister Rajitha Senaratne, both sides agreed to release all fishermen in their custody except those who face charges other than crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. With this confidence building measure, both sides must now sit down to the challenge of finding a long-term solution to the problems of the fishing communities in the region. Over the years, Tamil Nadu fishermen have with increasing stridency made the demand for the right to fish in the entire Palk Bay, describing it as their "traditional fishing grounds". It is no longer just about fishing rights around Kachchatheevu. The reason is that the catch is better on the Sri Lankan side. This is no accident. Bad practices such as the indiscriminate use of trawlers that dredge right down to the sea bed have depleted the resources along the Tamil Nadu coast. On the other side, the long years of conflict during which fishermen in Northeast Sri Lanka were barely allowed by the Sri Lankan Navy to put their boats out a few hundred metres into the sea has ensured that fish and other marine resources are still plentiful. Now that there are no military restrictions on fishing off Northeast Sri Lanka, Tamil fishermen there who are still struggling to rebuild their lives find themselves in daily competition with Tamil Nadu fishermen for what they claim is rightfully theirs. Worse, the fishermen from the Indian side, better organised and equipped with

bigger boats and better nets, use the same practices that ravaged their side of the bay.

It is no surprise that an agreement — finalised in 2008 when the Sri Lankan military operations against the LTTE were intensifying — that was favourable to Indian fishermen is now seen by the Sri Lankan side as requiring re-negotiation. The solution to the problem may well come from the fishermen themselves. With the backing of the two capitals, they are to hold a meeting of their representatives on January 20 and may explore options such as licensing and placing restrictions on the number of fishing days. Ultimately, however, the real solution for both, especially on the Indian side, lies in preserving what is left by moving away from coastal to deep sea fishing. The State government and the Centre must also encourage fishermen to diversify into related activities such as deep-freezing, preserving and canning. That could even pave the way for collaboration between Indian and Sri Lankan fishing communities. The way forward is to find ways to complement each other's livelihoods, instead of just competing over scarce resources.

▷ A NEW PARADIGM FOR INCLUSION: NACHIKET MOR COMMITTEE

The report of an RBI-appointed committee on financial inclusion and financial deepening has stimulated a wide-ranging debate on these crucial areas. However, policy measures initiated by the government and the RBI while adding to the numbers of new bank branches, new accounts and so on did not really enhance the quality of such inclusive practices. In September last year, the RBI asked the committee chaired by Nachiket Mor to prepare "a clear and detailed vision document" to lay down a set of "design principles" to guide national frameworks and regulation and to review existing strategies and institutions with a view to removing barriers to inclusion and to the deepening of the financial sector. The report, submitted in just over four months, is rich in detail, but its core agenda is to be seen in a few specific action points. Every Indian above 18 will have to be provided with a universal electronic bank account by January 2016, less than two years from now. Aadhaar will be the basis to open bank accounts. A vertically

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

18

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

differentiated banking system with payments banks for deposits and payments and wholesale banks for credit outreach will come up, with few entry barriers.

No one can fault the committee for the lack of ambition or a sense of urgency. It has underlined the urgency by stipulating a distance rule — no one need walk for more than 15 minutes to reach a point of contact to avail a financial service. That has been one of the major areas of dissent within the committee, with two of its members seeking a more realistic timeframe. The committee might have glossed over the huge costs that will have to be incurred in terms of physical infrastructure and human resources. No matter how important technology will be in the emerging financial scene, the role of human resources cannot be discounted. The idea of setting up differentiated banks is not new. Regional rural banks and local area banks which fall in this category did not measure up despite being theoretically sound. Their cost structure moved up in line with those of commercial banks, making them unviable. Despite a much lower capital requirement being stipulated for these banks, there may not be many takers for them. The assumption that Aadhaar will roll out across the country by the end of next year might be an optimistic one. Despite such doubts, the Nachiket Mor report is a truly visionary document that should help the Reserve Bank and the government to initiate specific moves towards complete financial inclusion.

▷ INDIA, SOUTH KOREA SIGN NINE PACTS

India and South Korea signed nine pacts aimed at imparting forward momentum to their bilateral ties that have seen intensification over the past four years. During a meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting South Korean President Park Geun-hye, India assured that work on the multi-billion-dollar Posco steel plant in Odisha would start in the coming weeks.

As Dr. Singh noted, the Agreement on the Protection of Classified Military Information would boost defence engagement and take it beyond the purchase of South Korean defence equipment to an area where Seoul is strong — maintaining the sanctity of its land and maritime borders.

Another forward looking aspect was exploring

the possibility of setting up a Korean Industrial Park in India. South Korea is one of the few countries with a trade surplus with China and India's intention is to not only to provide a new avenue for its industry suffering from sluggish growth in exports that account for half of the country's GDP, but also get integrated in the global supply chain.

The two sides also announced the conclusion of negotiations for revision of the existing Double Taxation Avoidance Convention. On Posco, the Prime Minister also held out the promise of grant of mining concessions which are at an advanced stage of processing. However, there was no comfort to South Korea on its desire to set up nuclear power plants in India. New Delhi has conveyed its intention to take up this proposal when it starts work on phase II of large nuclear power plants.

In order to further security cooperation, it was agreed to hold annual interactions between the national security structures of the two countries as also launch a Cyber Affairs Dialogue. In Science and Technology, both countries will build on the experience of working on many practical projects financed through a \$10 million Joint Fund by inking a MoU on Joint Applied Research. They also plan to step up collaboration in the peaceful uses of space science and technology.

Dr. Singh conveyed to Ms. Park his Government's decision to extend a 'tourist visa on arrival facility' to South Korean nationals.

The two leaders also touched on regional issues, particularly developments in the Korean peninsula and cooperation in the East Asia Summit processes. Ms. Park said the Korean peninsula had been facing the threat of nuclear weapons and efforts must be made to ensure peace and stability in the region.

▷ RUSSIA FORGES AXIS WITH IRAN, SYRIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the Iranian leadership for their role in getting off the ice talks on Tehran's nuclear programme. The Foreign Ministers of Russia, Iran and Syria held an unprecedented trilateral meeting in Moscow on Thursday to fine-tune their positions ahead of Syria peace talks next week.

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

The meeting appeared to confirm the West's long-standing suspicions of an emerging Russia-Syria-Iran axis, even as Foreign Minister Lavrov denied the three countries had any secret plan.

▷ MASSIVE INVESTMENTS, EMISSION CUTS NEEDED: U.N. CLIMATE SCIENCE PANEL

The U.N. climate science panel's yet to be released report will come up with a dire warning that the world would have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40-70% below 2010 levels by 2050 in order to have a fair chance to keep the rise in the global temperature below 2 degree Celsius.

This warning is one of the key summations in the Fifth Assessment report of Working Group III of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In contrast to the drastic reduction required in emissions to keep temperatures below dangerous levels, the report notes, emissions have grown by 2.2% on average during 2000-10 and the recession has not abated the growth of emissions which clocked at 3% growth during 2010-11 and 1-2% during 2011-2012.

The summary says that maintaining global temperature rise below 2 degree Celsius would require the concentration of greenhouse gases between 430-480 parts per million (ppm) of Carbon dioxide equivalent by the turn of century and keeping peak concentration levels below 515 ppm. The concentration of emissions has already breached the 400 ppm limits and is growing rapidly. With such tight control on emissions, the chances of keeping the temperature within safe range would be between 66-100%.

The report notes that keeping the emission concentration levels under this limit would require tripling or even quadrupling of the renewable and other clean energy production by 2050 compared to 2010 levels. Considering the low ambition the countries have shown to take action in the short run, the report warns that delaying mitigation through 2030 will increase the challenges and reduce the options for keeping emissions within the dangerous levels. The world might be forced to deploy yet-untested technological changes which tamper with natural climatic processes at a large scale.

▷ CONSUMPTION LOSSES

The report acknowledges that such massive transformation of economies will come at great costs. Even under what would be ideal conditions, the actions to keep emissions within check would lead to global consumption losses by 1-4% in 2030, 2-6% in 2050 and 2-12% in 2100 compared to business as usual emission rates.

The varied levels of growth of economies have made the authors of the report also put the question before the countries of how the burden of reducing emissions would be shared. A majority of accumulated GHG emissions so far have originated from the rich countries that have relatively low population levels but the spurt of economic growth in emerging economies is increasing current emissions. The ratio in per capita emissions between developed and poor countries is 9 times for the median value. At the same time, these developing countries such as India and China are building up massive new infrastructure where the potential to reduce emissions exists at lower costs. To be able to do so, the report says, "The financial transfers to ameliorate this asymmetry could be in the order of hundred billions of USD per year before mid-century to bring concentration in the range of 450 ppm of Carbon dioxide equivalent by 2100."

The IPCC says in its reports, "The Cancun pledges are broadly consistent with scenarios reaching 550-650 ppm Carbon dioxide equivalent ppm by 2100." The Cancun pledges refer to the commitments countries made to cut the emissions between 2010 and 2020. The 550-650 ppm emission concentration mark refers to the levels where the chance of preventing dangerous climate change is less than 33%. The scientists' panel notes, the pledges 'correspond to scenarios that explicitly delay mitigation through 2020 or beyond relative to what would achieve lowest global cost."

▷ INDIA, PAKISTAN TO ESTABLISH RECIPROCAL NDMA BY FEBRUARY-END

Following a 16-month hiatus, India-Pakistan relations showed signs of thawing with the two sides agreeing to find ways of establishing reciprocal Non-Discriminatory Market Access (NDMA) by February-

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

20

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

end. This includes issuing bank licences to allow banks to function in each other's country.

Addressing reporters after a meeting, the Commerce Ministers of both the countries said they had agreed to open the Wagah-Attari border for trade at all times of the year. They also agreed to allow containers, which were until now unloaded at the check-post and re-loaded on the other side, to be moved right up to Amritsar and Lahore.

Bilateral trade between the two countries is slightly more than \$3 billion a year. Both sides expressed hope that trade would go up many times when NDMA is established on a reciprocal basis. For this, India needs to open up to Pakistan 614 items. Pakistan, on the other hand, needs to open up to India two lists comprising 936 and 1209 items, said the Indian officials.

The ministers agreed that both sides will convene the meetings of the technical working groups of customs, railways, banking, standards organizations and energy. A Joint Business Forum of Chief Executive Officers in different sectors which has already met twice after the incumbent Pakistan Government took office, is expected to meet again in Pakistan in a couple of weeks. The sub-groups formed by this forum are on textiles, tourism, energy, light engineering, pharmaceuticals and others.

▷ U.N. WARNS OF MOUNTING ATROCITIES IN SOUTH SUDAN

As three weeks of peace talks failed to quell the rising violence in South Sudan, the United Nations has warned of mounting atrocities by both sides. The fighting began on December 15 after South Sudan President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy, Riek Machar of attempting a coup.

Recent estimates have suggested that the month-long conflict could already have claimed 10,000 lives with as many as 460,000 people displaced, according to the UN.

The conflict has also drawn in regional powers as Uganda has confirmed that some of its soldiers have been killed while fighting on the side of the Government forces. Uganda has maintained that its soldiers are merely guarding vital installations, yet rebel military spokesperson, General Lul Koang said the Ugandan air force has been bombing rebel

positions. "They are providing close air support to government forces," he said.

In Addis Ababa, delegates from both sides have been unable to hammer out an agreement for the cessation of hostilities despite three weeks of negotiations. The sticking points, officials said, is the release of 11 senior politicians imprisoned by President Kiir, and the complications created by the presence of Ugandan forces on the ground.

Scoring over Polio

On January 13, 2011, an 18-month-old infant in Howrah district of West Bengal was found to have been crippled by a naturally occurring wild strain of the polio-causing virus. However, no more children fell victim to such viruses over the next one year and India was then removed from the list of countries where polio is endemic. India has remained free of polio, and analysis of sewage samples have not turned up any signs of the virus lurking silently in the environment. Once final tests confirm that the wild virus has not been seen here for the last three years, the World Health Organisation's 11-nation South-East Asia Region (of which India is a part) can be formally certified as polio-free. This region will then join the three that already enjoy this status — the Americas, Western Pacific and Europe. For India, this is an enormous public health achievement. Not so long ago experts believed that India, with its huge population, many poor and living in squalor, would be the very last to eradicate polio, a disease that once struck 50,000 to 100,000 Indian children annually. Even in 2009, nearly half of the world's polio cases were occurring here. Yet, through determined efforts and systems to ensure that no child was missed during immunisation drives, transmission of the wild virus has been halted. Each national immunisation campaign is a mammoth operation, with 2.4 million vaccinators reaching oral vaccine drops to some 170 million children.

But the job is not over yet. Although no child in India has been paralysed by wild polio viruses over the last three years, several have been affected during the period when live but weakened strains of the virus used in the oral polio vaccine turned virulent again. Such vaccine-derived viruses can also spread like wild ones and be just as dangerous. In

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

order to safely withdraw oral vaccines, all countries that rely on them have been asked to introduce at least one dose of an injectable polio vaccine based on killed viruses into their routine childhood immunisation. In India, steps are being taken to strengthen the way such immunisation is provided, particularly in States where vaccination levels are low, by incorporating lessons from the polio campaign for reaching every child and gaining community acceptance. Moreover, polio is still endemic in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria, and in the past year the viruses have spread from there to other countries. There is therefore the risk that the virus might be imported into India too. As long as it continues to circulate in the world, India and other countries that are polio-free must keep their guard up.

SAFEGUARDING ANCIENT TREASURES

The return of three 1,000-year-old stone idols to India from the U.S. kindles the hope of recovering many more such stolen antiquities. Impressive detective work and persistent efforts by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations deserve commendation for this. The restitution of the three idols is a part of ICE's ongoing efforts, and has less to do with assuaging feathers ruffled by the recent diplomatic row. In the last seven years, ICE, which was set up as a principal investigation arm of the Department of Homeland Security in 2003, has recovered more than 7,150 objects belonging to 26 countries. India benefited even on an earlier occasion. In 2006, ICE recovered a 9th century idol, which was stolen from a temple in Madhya Pradesh. To its credit, ICE in the recent case traced the trail of the stolen idols that spanned three continents and seized them when traffickers tried to move them across U.S. borders.

In contrast, the vigil for cultural objects that are moved across the Indian borders has been slack. For instance, container scanners are hardly available in Indian seaports. This has helped smugglers mix stolen idols with newly made look-alikes and ship them as handicrafts in large containers undetected. Another reason for ICE's success is its training. Agents participate in workshops organised by the

Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute and familiarise themselves with specificities of the illicit antiquities trade, and methods to investigate and store antiquities. Such a focussed approach is unheard of among Indian State and Central government agencies. Another critical shortcoming is the lack of documentation. Indian authorities realised the importance of documentation in the recent episode. The Archaeological Survey of India had details of two of the three idols and alerted the Interpol in time. Unfortunately, such thoughtful actions are few and far between. The sad truth is that many antiquities remain undocumented. In 2007, the Ministry of Culture launched the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities to complete documentation of seven million antiquities by 2010. Until 2012, it had documented only 800,000 artefacts. Worse, the NMMA put details of only 2,823 objects on its website. Since 1987, the Central government has been promising to amend the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, which mandates registration of old artefacts and prohibits their export, but it has not done much on that front. An important lesson from the return of the three idols is that unless India vastly improves protective measures and investigative infrastructure, it can neither control trafficking nor recover lost antiquities.

AGNI-IV LAUNCH

Agni-IV, India's surface-to-surface missile with a range of about 4,000 km, will be test-fired from the Wheeler Island, off Dhamra village on the Odisha coast, on January 20. It is a strategic missile which can carry a nuclear warhead weighing about one tonne. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which has developed the Agni-IV, will do the test-firing on Monday from its Integrated Test Range on the Wheeler Island. The missile has already been flight-tested three times. While the maiden launch was a failure, the next two were successful. The two-stage missile weighs 17 tonnes and is 20 metres long.

DRDO officials had earlier said Agni-IV offered a "fantastic nuclear deterrence" because with its range of 4,000 km, "it can cover the entire area on the other side of the border." While the Army has

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

22

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

already deployed Agni-I, II and III missiles, all of which are strategic missiles carrying nuclear warheads, Agni-IV and Agni-V have not been inducted into the Army yet.

▷ THIRD LINE HIV TREATMENT THROUGH GOVERNMENT SOON

The Centre will soon include Third Line therapy for persons living with HIV in the government's Anti-Retroviral Treatment programme.

Preliminary work has begun in this regard and the process is expected to be completed in 8 to 10 months, Lov Verma, Secretary, Department of AIDS Control, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said on Saturday. Third line drugs are said to be the only succour for HIV-affected who have become resistant to second line drugs. At present, patients requiring third line treatment are forced to go to the private sector for treatment.

The government would have to identify the number of patients who need such treatment before it can place orders for the medicines and formulate a budget, he told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the Launch Workshop of National Data Analysis Plan under National AIDS Control Programme-IV held here. The Technical Research Group (TRG) had taken the government's suggestion to include third line treatment and approval. The TRG has now been asked to submit a timeline for the project, after which it will be sent to the finance department for approval, he said.

It is expected that the third line treatment will be included in next year's budget. Speaking on the Prevention of Parent-to-Child Transmission scheme, Mr. Verma said the Department of AIDS Control would roll out the programme this year. In the first year, it expects to cover 90 per cent of the problem districts, and the entire country should be covered by next year, he said.

Currently, training and preparation for the PPTCT is under way, which would be rolled out in a phased manner. The PPTCT is already in place in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The Department of AIDS Control would soon be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of

Information and Technology to explore different advocacy methods, he said. It had already signed MoUs with the Ministry of Shipping and six other Ministries.

▷ RBI STANDARDISES GOLD LOAN NORMS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that it had been decided to prescribe a loan-to-value (LTV) ratio of not exceeding 75 per cent for banks' lending against gold jewellery, including bullet-repayment loans against pledge of gold jewellery. "Therefore, henceforth loans sanctioned by banks should not exceed 75 per cent of the value of gold ornaments and jewellery," the RBI said in a notification to all banks. Further, it has been decided that gold jewellery accepted as security / collateral will have to be valued at the average of the closing price of 22 carat gold for the preceding 30 days as quoted by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd. [Formerly known as the Bombay Bullion Association Ltd. (BBA)].

The central bank reiterated that banks should continue to observe necessary and usual safeguards, and also have a suitable policy for lending against gold jewellery with the approval of their boards of directors. Earlier this month, the RBI had raised loan to value ratio to 75 per cent from 60 per cent. This was in view of moderation in the growth of gold loan portfolios of non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) in the recent past.

▷ RUSSIA BACKS IRAN'S PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA-2 PEACE CONFERENCE

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov strongly backed Iran's participation in the Geneva-2 peace conference even as he made it clear Moscow will not shed tears over refusal of the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) to attend the talks.

Mr Lavrov said Iran's absence from the conference would make it "a sham."

The Russian foreign policy chief was not so categorical about the participation of the SNC, which is reported to have threatened to boycott Geneva-2 unless U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon retracts its invitation. Dismissing SNC's threat of boycott as "tantrums" Mr Lavrov stressed that the Coalition had been created by "outside sponsors" and was "only part of the opposition forces."

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

“Inside Syria there are groups that are also keen to take part in deciding the fate of the Syrian people... but they are not part of the SNC,” he said, adding that the Coalition on the whole consisted of “responsible people” who wished peace for Syria.

▷ JAPAN SAYS U.S.

BASE IN OKINAWA IS ONLY SOLUTION

The Japanese government said, it would push forward with a long-stalled agreement to relocate a U.S. military base within Okinawa, despite the re-election of Mayor Susumu Inamine who opposes the plan.

A government spokesman said building the base in Nago city is the only solution, given all the factors involved.

The U.S. and Japan agreed in 1996 to move the Marines Corps Futenma air station to Nago from a more congested part of Okinawa, but many Okinawans want the base off their island completely.

The plan got a boost last month when the governor of Okinawa gave the go-ahead for land reclamation to build the new base, whose runways would extend over water from the U.S. military's existing Camp Schwab. Opponents filed a lawsuit last week seeking to invalidate the governor's approval.

The Futenma air station would be moved from Ginowan city to the sparsely populated Henoko district in Nago, because of concerns about aircraft noise, accidents in civilian areas and base-related crimes such as rape. The proposed move is part of a broader plan to consolidate and reduce the U.S. military presence in Okinawa, currently home to about half of the U.S. troops in Japan.

Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which supports the move, wooed voters with promises of additional development funds for the city. But an exit poll of 1,204 voters by Japan's *Kyodo Newsservice* found 65 per cent opposed to the base, and 13 per cent in favor.

▷ IRAN CURBS NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES; EU, US TO LIFT SANCTIONS

Iran took the first steps to limit its nuclear programme under a deal with world powers, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed, paving the way for the European Union

and the United States to suspend some sanctions.

This is the first time that Iran has scaled back its nuclear programme, 10 years after its secret activities came to light and prompted Western fears that Tehran was working on a nuclear weapon.

In Tehran, Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, said the country had halted uranium enrichment to 20 per cent and had begun down-blending uranium enriched to higher levels, according to the Fars news agency.

A report by IAEA inspectors confirmed these measures, which Iran had agreed to in its deal with six western powers on November 24, under which several sanctions on Iran will in turn be lifted for six months. During this period, the two sides hope to reach a permanent solution to concerns that Iran is seeking a nuclear weapon. The IAEA report, issued by nuclear inspectors in Tehran, triggers a carefully choreographed sequence of events that should see sanctions suspended before the end of the day.

IAEA inspectors also said that Iran is not building any new uranium enrichment plants and is no longer working to complete its Arak reactor, which would produce plutonium as a side-product once it operates. The international community has been concerned that uranium enriched to 20 per cent or plutonium from Arak could be turned into material for nuclear warheads. EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels are expected to announce the suspension of sanctions in the afternoon.

In return for Iran's compliance, the EU and the U.S. have agreed to lift all sanctions on trading with Iran in petrochemical products, gold and precious metals. Companies will again be able to provide transport and insurance for crude oil shipments. The six-month window is aimed at building trust and buying time for Iran and the six powers to seek a wider-ranging deal that would further limit Tehran's nuclear programme, in return for lifting all sanctions for good, notably an economically crippling oil embargo.

“The initial agreement does not change the fact that Iran's nuclear activities continue to be in violation of various UN Security Council resolutions,” the EU's diplomatic service wrote in a briefing note last week.

Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

24

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

IMF RAISES OUTLOOK FOR GLOBAL AND U.S. ECONOMIES

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is slightly more optimistic about the global and U.S. economies this year than it was three months ago.

In an updated outlook released, the global lending organisation forecasts that the world economy will grow 3.7 per cent in 2014, and that the U.S. economy will grow 2.8 per cent. The global forecast is 0.1 percentage point higher and the U.S. forecast 0.2 point higher than the IMF's October forecast. After a sluggish start, global economic growth picked up in the second half of 2013. As a result, growth amounted to 3 per cent last year. The IMF expects it will be even stronger growth this year. The IMF forecasts that the U.S. economy grew 1.9 per cent last year. And its 2.8 per cent forecast for this year would match U.S. growth in 2012. Part of the anticipated improvement is based on expectations for less drag from higher U.S. taxes and across-the-board spending cuts.

By 2015, the IMF forecast the U.S. economy will grow 3 per cent, or 0.4 percentage point lower than its October forecast. For countries in Europe using the common euro currency the IMF forecast stronger growth. The region is emerging from recession after a lingering debt crisis. Economic activity shrank 0.7 per cent in 2012 and 0.4 per cent in 2013. But this year, the IMF projects 1 per cent growth and 1.4 per cent in 2015.

URJIT PANEL SUGGESTS 4% CPI INFLATION TARGET

An expert committee appointed to examine the current monetary policy framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has suggested that the apex bank should adopt the new CPI (consumer price index) as the measure of the nominal anchor for policy communication. The expert committee was headed by Urjit R. Patel, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

The committee felt that inflation should be the nominal anchor for the monetary policy framework. The nominal anchor or the target for inflation should be set at 4 per cent with a band of +/- 2 per cent around it.

"The nominal anchor should be defined in terms of headline CPI inflation, which closely reflects the cost of living and influences inflation expectations relative to other available metrics," the committee felt. "This target should be set in the frame of a two-year horizon that is consistent with the need to balance the output costs of disinflation against the speed of entrenchment of credibility in policy commitment," the report said.

In view of the elevated level of current CPI inflation and hardened inflation expectations, supply constraints and weak output performance, the committee said the transition path to the target zone should be graduated to bringing down inflation from the current level of 10 per cent to 8 per cent over a period not exceeding the next 12 months and to 6 per cent over a period not exceeding the next 24 month period before formally adopting the recommended target of 4 per cent inflation with a band of +/- 2 per cent.

Since food and fuel account for more than 57 per cent of the CPI on which the direct influence of monetary policy is limited, the commitment to the nominal anchor would need to be demonstrated by timely monetary policy response to risks from second-round effects and inflation expectations in response to shocks to food and fuel, the committee pointed out.

The committee asked the Central Government to ensure that the fiscal deficit as a ratio to GDP (gross domestic product) is brought down to 3.0 per cent by 2016-17. "Administered setting of prices, wages and interest rates are significant impediments to monetary policy transmission and achievement of the price stability objective," it said. As such, these required a commitment from the government towards their elimination.

INS ARIHANT ALL SET FOR SEA TRIALS

India's first indigenously built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, INS Arihant would be going to sea trials within "a few weeks or months" as its preliminary harbour acceptance trials are over and various systems, including nuclear propulsion, have proceeded satisfactorily and as per the time schedule.

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

26

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

The submarine would undergo sea trials, during which all the systems, including its ballistic missiles, would be tested before it is finally commissioned into the Indian Navy, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral L.V.S. Babu, said.

Incidentally, INS Arihant, which is the lead ship of India's Arihant-class of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, would also figure on the Indian Navy tableaux at this year's Republic Day Parade.

The sub-surface ballistic nuclear missile (SSBN) submarine would be "indigenously designed, built, operationalised and maintained," said Rear Admiral Babu, adding that "there were no hiccups in the progress of harbour trials" at Vishakhapatnam. Once the sea trials, which would test the capability of various systems in real deep sea scenario, are over the Navy would announce its arrival, he said, as it would be a "stabilising force in the Indian Ocean".

He also made a mention of the Scorpene submarines, being developed at the Mazagaon docks, and said these are scheduled to be inducted from 2016. "We would be looking at inducting one submarine per year till we have six of them in the fleet."

Desilting on at Mumbai harbour

The ACNS also spoke about another submarine INS Sindhughosh running aground at the Mumbai harbour. "There is a big problem of silt at the harbour and due to it the time window for entry of submarines and other boats has reduced. While the submarine was entering the harbour, the water level receded and to prevent any damage to the bottom of the vessel it was stopped. Later it was tugged and put into its position."

Salvage of INS Sindhurakshak

The harbour had witnessed the sinking of another submarine INS Sindhurakshak following multiple explosions last August.

The vendor, the Rear Admiral said, would take about 45 days to "mobilise equipment" which would mean installing the cranes, heavy lift barges and tugs. "It is going to be a major salvage operation and the actual operation is likely to be completed in up to three months." Since the submarine had some weapons on board when it went down, the

responsibility for any further damage during the operation would also be on the vendor.

▷ JAINS GRANTED MINORITY STATUS

The Union Cabinet on Monday decided to accord minority status to Jains but the decision would be subject to the outcome of pending cases on the issue. While a proposal to this effect was put up to the Cabinet by the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs some weeks ago, it assumed urgency after Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi threw his weight behind the Jain community's demand on Sunday.

If the court cases are settled in favour of the Jains, the community would become the sixth designated minority community of the country.

As per the Cabinet note, Jains would be included as a minority under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act (NCM), 1992. In 2005, the Supreme Court had disposed the appeal of minority-designation-for-Jains advocate Bal Patil — in the case that now goes by his name — on the ground that the judgment in the T.M.A. Pai case had said States would be the unit for considering demands of both linguistic and religious minority status.

A review petition filed by the Centre in this regard is still pending. A contentious issue for long since a section of Jains is opposed to being declared a minority, the decks were cleared for inclusion of the community under the NCM Act after the Attorney General opined that this would be "neither illegal nor unconstitutional".

Officials in the Ministry said no separate legislation was needed and the executive order for including Jains within the ambit of the NCM would suffice. The NCM had made out a case for designating Jains as a minority community way back in 2000. This decision would allow the community to run their educational institutions as per the same rules that govern all minority institutions. As of now, Jains are regarded as minorities in some States, including Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Jains, according to the 2001 Census, make up 0.4 per cent of the country's population. In the

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

winter session of Parliament, Union Minister of Minority Affairs K. Rahman Khan had informed the Lok Sabha that the representations from several Jain organisations demanding national minority status for the community was “under active consideration”.

▷ NEW EVIDENCE ON SYRIAN REGIME’S ‘ATROCITIES’

A cache of photographic evidence, which if independently authenticated, will establish grave human rights violations amounting to “crimes against humanity” by Syria’s Bashar al-Assad regime has come to light. Coming as it does on the eve of the Syria peace talks beginning in Montreux on Wednesday, the disclosure is likely to add to the complexity of the negotiations, already in some uncertainty over Iran having been dropped by the U.N. from the international effort to end the three-year conflict.

The evidence – over 55,000 digital images that formed the basis of a report by a three-member team of eminent international lawyers – was made available to CNN’s “Amanpour” in a joint exclusive with the Guardian. The photographs show gruesome images of roughly 11,000 Syrian detainees – each photographed three or four times in a military hospital after their execution — over the period from March 2011 to August 2013. The bodies “showed signs of starvation, brutal beatings, strangulation, and other forms of torture and killing,” according to the report. The images were taken by a member of the Syrian military police who was tasked with photographing the bodies, and who smuggled the images he took during the course of his work out of Syria on memory sticks. Codenamed “Caesar” by the inquiry team, the person later defected with his family fearing repercussions once the pictures were made public.

CNN stated that it could not independently verify the authenticity of the photographs and other documents referenced in the report, but has considered the report’s conclusions based on the credibility of the team, whose members include leading international lawyers and forensic experts with vast experience in the prosecution of war crimes. The inquiry team was chaired by Sir

Desmond de Silva QC, a former Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, who was personally appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations.

“Caesar,” who the team interrogated on January 12, 13 and 18 was a “truthful and credible witness,” according to the team’s report, who sent his photographs to a contact with links to international human rights groups. According to the report, “Caesar” had to take photographs of people tortured and killed in detention. The reasons were two.

First, to give families a death certificate without them having to see the bodies, and second to confirm that orders to execute the individuals had been carried out. “Caesar” himself was not a witness to the torture and execution. He sometimes had to photograph upto 50 bodies a day, which suggests systematic killings, the report concludes.

The team said that there was evidence of “physical injury of the sort that would result from beating, binding, restraint or other physical assault but excluding injuries that could reasonably have occurred as the result of legal combat engagement.”

The inquiry team came to the conclusion that the evidence would support findings of “crimes against humanity” against the current Syrian regime. It would also support findings of war crimes against the regime. The inquiry was commissioned by Carter-Ruck Solicitors, a legal firm that specializes in international law. The report does not disclose the individuals or organisations, if any, who employed Carter-Ruck Solicitors to commission the inquiry.

▷ THAILAND DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR PROTESTS

Thailand’s government declared a state of emergency in Bangkok and surrounding areas to cope with protests that have stirred up violent attacks. Labour Minister Chalerm Yubumrung announced that the measure would take effect 60 days.

Protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban, in a speech to followers, questioned whether the declaration was justified, saying the demonstrators had peaceful.

“Is it right for them to use the emergency decree to declare a state of emergency to come and deal with us? Come and get us,” he declared to an enthusiastic crowd of hundreds at a park in

**Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

downtown Bangkok. Thousands more are encamped at other locations in the capital.

The emergency decree greatly expands the power of security forces to issue orders and search, arrest and detain people, with limited judicial and parliamentary oversight. The areas covered had already been placed under tougher-than-normal security under the country's Internal Security Act.

The protesters have been demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to make way for an appointed government to implement reforms to fight corruption. Mr Yingluck called elections on Feb. 2 but the protesters are insisting they not be held.

The opposition Democrat Party, closely aligned with the protesters, is boycotting the polls. The official announcement of the emergency decree said the elections would proceed as planned.

▷ UN WITHDRAWS IRAN INVITATION TO SYRIA TALKS

The U.N. secretary-general withdrew his invitation to Iran to join this week's Syria peace talks, saying he is "deeply disappointed" by Iran's statements on Monday. A spokesman for Ban Ki-moon announced the withdrawal less than 24 hours after Ban surprised the U.S. and others by saying he had invited Syria's closest regional ally. The invitation was withdrawn shortly after Iran's U.N. ambassador declared the Islamic Republic wouldn't join the Syria talks if required to accept the roadmap sketched during a 2012 Geneva conference on Syria.

A spokesman for Mr. Ban, Martin Nesirky, said senior Iranian officials had assured Ban that Iran understood the terms of his invitation. The talks are set to begin in the Swiss city of Montreux, with delegations from the United States, Russia and close to 40 other countries attending. Face-to-face negotiations between the Syrian government and its opponents the first since the three-year civil war began tart Friday in Geneva.

But Mr. Ban's announcement that Iran was invited to Montreux angered Syria's main Western-backed opposition group, which over the weekend had announced it would join the talks after intense international pressure.

Invitations to the Montreux meeting had been

subject to approval by the initiating states, Russia and the United States, but the two countries had been at an impasse over Iran. Amid the anger, Mr. Ban said Monday morning that he was "urgently considering his options" in light of the "disappointing conduct of some participants" in the peace talks.

The United States on Monday welcomed U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon's decision to rescind his invitation to Iran to attend an international conference on Syria this week, saying it hoped the move would refocus attention on the goals of the meeting. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the U.S. hopes "all parties can now return to focus on the task at hand, which is bringing an end to the suffering of the Syrian people and beginning a process toward a political transition."

▷ COMET-CHASING ROSETTA SENDS SIGNAL TO EARTH

A comet-chasing space probe that has been in hibernation for almost three years has woken up and sent its first signal back to Earth. The European Space Agency received the all-clear message "Hello World!" from its Rosetta spacecraft some 800 million kilometers away shortly after 7 pm. Rosetta was put into hibernation in 2011 to conserve energy for its long journey to meet with comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

If all goes as planned the probe will rendezvous with the comet in the coming months and drop a lander onto its icy surface in November.

▷ WORST IS OVER FOR INDIAN ECONOMY: MOODY'S ANALYTICS

The worst is over for India's economy, though growth may reach its potential only next year, with GDP expansion likely to touch 5 to 5.5 per cent this year and more than 6 per cent in 2015, Moody's Analytics said.

Prospects about the forthcoming general elections may lift business confidence and will be the trigger for the economy, which has stabilised after downside risks eased with the rupee and current account issues under control.

Moody's Analytics is a division of Moody's Corporation that is engaged in economic research and analysis. The report is independent and does not

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

reflect the opinions of its credit-rating wing, Moody's Investors Service. Exports have already started to pick up, helping to narrow the CAD, it said, adding that "on the home front, fewer downside risks, a more competent central bank governor, and the prospect of better government after the May elections have boosted business and investor confidence."

Basing its optimism on better-than-expected third-quarter growth (Q2 of FY14), the report said the economy should steadily improve in the coming quarters as downside risks have started to recede.

▷ JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL

The seventh edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival concluded on Tuesday even as cold weather and intermittent showers limited the number of visitors expected on the final day.

Two venues — Char Bagh and the Front Lawns — had to be moved indoors after strong winds knocked down the shamiana on Monday night.

Although the start of the day saw thin crowds, the number of visitors gradually increased in the second half, leading festival co-director and author William Dalrymple to tweet "the heavens may have opened but nothing will keep the crowds away," with a photograph of crowds waiting for the festival's closing debate, featuring Aam Aadmi Party member Shazia Ilmi, among others.

Since it was established in 2006, the festival has become one of the flagship events in Jaipur, attended by thousands of people from across the world every year. This year's edition — which saw the primary sponsorship change hands from DSC to Zee — witnessed several prominent speakers, originally on the itinerary, skip the event for different reasons. Those who could not make it included Union Minister Shashi Tharoor, film writer-lyricist-poet Javed Akhtar and champion boxer M.C. Mary Kom. The keynote address was delivered by Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen. The DSC prize for South Asian Literature went to Indian author Cyrus Mistry for his *Chronicles of a Corpse Bearer*.

▷ OIL EXPLORATION AND SECURITY

The Union Home Ministry has advised the Petroleum Ministry against considering Chinese

firms for the award of exploration rights in oil and gas blocks due to "security reasons". The on-land blocks in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab proposed for auction are located close to the border with Pakistan where apparently China is engaged in different projects. The blocks in the northeast and offshore ones in the Mahanadi basin, says the Home Ministry, are "close to sensitive defence installations and strategic assets". In its view, these blocks should therefore be given only to Indian public sector companies for exploration. The Home Ministry also wants its advice to be kept in mind while finalising sub-contracts for services such as equipment procurement, consultancy and maintenance. Truth to tell, it is not as if too many foreign companies are lining up to invest in the country's oil and gas exploration sector, not to talk of Chinese ones. The auctioning of oil exploration blocks under the New Exploration Licensing Policy has attracted but tepid attention from foreign bidders in the last couple of rounds, and the story is likely to be the same in the upcoming one as well.

The bogey of threat from Chinese companies needs to be busted. For all its exertions in recent years, the government has not provided concrete evidence of any wrongdoing by Chinese companies in the telecom and IT sectors. Its warnings have been based on mere suspicion — which is not enough grounds to keep out a foreign investor, especially in these difficult times for the economy. On the other hand, it was Facebook, Google and Twitter, companies that are headquartered in what is supposed to be a friendly country, which were in the eye of a storm over sharing data from their servers, including that of Indians, with the U.S. National Security Agency. This proves companies from friendly countries are as capable of aiding espionage as those from not-so-friendly ones. And the answer is not to ban or show the door to all multinationals but to put in place protective systems to safeguard the country's interests and assets. In the case of the oil blocks there is indeed a problem as these are located in strategic or sensitive parts of the country. Instead of trying to keep out companies from one country or the other, the government would do well to create a reporting and monitoring system that will enable

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Weekly Current Affairs Update for IAS Exam

- ❖ You will be provided current affairs on various important topics on a weekly basis
- ❖ Important national and international news from various sources at a single platform for your convenience
- ❖ Various Categories (National, International, Economy, etc..)

Inaugural Offer
₹ 1040 ₹ 299

For Any Query Call our Moderator at: 011 - 45151781

WHY IS IT A WIN-WIN SITUATION FOR THE STUDENTS?

- You will be provided current affairs on various important topics on a weekly basis.
- Important national and international news from various sources at a single platform for your convenience.
- Each and every topic will be given point wise , making it easier to grasp.
- Very handy when it comes to various competitive exams.....

VARIOUS CATEGORIES:

- **Planning Commission**
- **Ministry of External Affairs**
- **National Portal of India**
- **National**
- **International**
- **Economy**
- **India And The World**
- **Sports**
- **In The News**
- **Science and Technology**
- **Burning Issues (Editorials From Different Newspapers)**

WHAT YOU WILL GET:

- You will get (52 Issues) PDF Only no Hard Copy

For Full Information Click Here:

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/current-affairs/weekly-update>

security agencies to keep an eye on the activities of these companies, especially when it comes to blocks located close to defence installations. That is the way to handle security threats.

▷ MYANMARTO ALLOW INSPECTION OF ALLEGED MASSACRE SITE

Myanmar will allow international observers to inspect the site of the alleged killings of more than 40 Rohingya Muslims. This came in the context of reports of attacks against Muslims. The United Nations earlier condemned two reported attacks by local Buddhists in Rakhine State on January 9 and 13, and called on Myanmar to investigate.

On January 13, a policeman was reportedly killed by Rohingya villagers, prompting an attack on Du Chee Yar Tan village by police and Rakhine locals that killed at least 40 "Rohingya Muslim men, women and children," Pillay said.

The Under-Secretary General of the UN Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos also said she was "deeply concerned," about the killings of "many civilians and a policeman." The state-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper on Thursday reported a policeman was missing in the area amid clashes between authorities and "mobs," but government officials denied reports of a massacre.

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority group, who were denied Myanmar nationality and rights to own property and travel freely by legislation passed in 1982. The government views the Rohingya as the descendants of Bengalis brought to the Rakhine by the British colonialists to work as labourers.

▷ DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS (XDR-TB)

That the medicine chest is bereft of effective new drugs to fight the extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) strain has once again become frighteningly clear. According to a study published recently in *The Lancet*, while only 16 per cent (17 of the 107) of a South African patient cohort had either treatment cure or completion at the end of two years of follow-up, as many as 49 patients died and 25 failed treatment. With the strain remaining resistant to at least four of the most potent anti-TB

drugs available today, XDR-TB patients have virtually exhausted all treatment options. Hence, despite long, complicated and prohibitively expensive treatment using toxic drugs, the outcome is at best poor.

The dire urgency to bring immediate focus on the discovery of efficacious anti-TB drugs to treat all forms of drug-resistant strains becomes clear as hospitals in South Africa, for want of beds, are being forced to discharge XDR-TB patients who are yet to be cured.

This is particularly ominous as they can spread the disease with equal ease as those with drug-sensitive TB. With the median survival period from the time of discharge being nearly 20 months, the threat of the dangerous form of TB spiralling out of control is real as many patients are culture-positive and about a third are smear-positive at the time of discharge; smear-positive patients have a higher bacterial load and hence a greater potential for spreading the disease. If this situation is allowed to continue for a few more years, the XDR-TB strain would spread to all countries.

There is also an immediate and pressing need for the high-burden countries to increase the number of beds for treating drug-resistant cases. It is time to come up with acceptable and workable solutions to isolate XDR-TB treatment failure or incurable cases to cut the transmission chain. Reducing the reservoir of TB-infected people through a simple, cheap and effective isoniazid preventive therapy in children under five years of age exposed to adults with pulmonary TB, will pay significant dividends in the long run. Next in priority should be ensuring that most drug-sensitive patients are diagnosed early, treatment using the correct drug regimen is initiated without delay, and the default rate is greatly reduced. This would automatically prevent the emergence of drug-resistant forms. The importance of this becomes all the more clear as all the parameters that go into the successful completion of drug-resistant TB treatment are fraught with problems. India, which is now expanding and equipping MDR-TB diagnostic centres with GeneXpert, has already detected 64,000 cases, the highest in the world.

INDIA, JAPAN AGREE TO ENHANCE SECURITY AND DEFENCE TIES

The summit meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Japan was a continuation of the efforts to forge closer security, political and defence ties by putting in place new building blocks and expanding the horizons of ongoing initiatives.

However, the talks between Manmohan Singh and Shinzo Abe also reflected the gap on the nuclear issue.

The visiting Japanese Prime Minister spoke on the importance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has not been put into force mainly due to India's resistance. But Dr. Singh felt India's own commitment not to test any more nuclear bombs should suffice to convince Japan into signing a bilateral civil nuclear deal.

The two countries signed eight pacts, of which half were connected with Japanese aid, thus indicating that soft loans and outright grants will continue to remain an integral component of Tokyo's strategy of reaching out to New Delhi. Mr. Abe held out the promise of more aid, of which 70 per cent will go for implementing phase-III of the Delhi Metro project.

On the defence side, the two countries decided to make joint naval exercises a permanent feature and India, despite the experience of 2007, invited Japan to join the Indo-U.S Malabar series. Seven years ago, the presence of Japan and Australia in the Malabar series fuelled protests at home and from China leading to the dropping of the duo from subsequent chapters.

The Prime Ministers reviewed the progress made in selling hi-tech US-2 amphibious aircraft to India, with government sources saying final plans envisaged a transfer of a substantial number of such planes. This is the first time Japan is offering to sell a plane which has military uses as well.

With Mr. Abe setting up a National Security Council for the first time in Japan's history, the Prime Ministers decided to hold politico-security consultations on a regular basis with India's National Security Advisor, besides stepping up the pace of meetings between the Defence Ministers.

With a new government slated to take over

here towards the middle of this year, two leaders decided not to let the momentum drop by affirming the need for holding three important consultations in the security arena after the change of guard — dialogue between India, Japan and the U.S., defence policy dialogue and two-plus-two talks, a unique forum for India involving the Defence and Foreign Secretaries of both countries.

Non-tariff barriers

Japan also lowered non-tariff barriers to import of shrimps that will help Indian fishermen. Recognising the importance of people-to-people exchanges, the Prime Ministers hoped that the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteer scheme would be expanded to uncovered sectors while visa regimes are being relaxed by both sides.

Padma Vibhushan

The world famous yoga guru, B.K.S. Iyengar, and the former chief of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), R.A. Mashelkar, have been awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian honour. Mr. Iyengar (95), who founded the Iyengar school of yoga that has millions of followers across the globe including in China, was once named by TIME magazine as one of the 100 most influential persons in the world. The 71-year-old Mr. Mashelkar has played a significant role in evolving science and technology policies in post-liberalised India. A chemical engineer, he is also a former head of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Classical singer Begum Parveen Sultana, Justice Dalvir Bhandari, author Ruskin Bond, the former Chief Justice of India J.S. Verma, former Comptroller and Auditor General V.N. Kaul, renowned novelist Anita Desai, and Tamil lyricist Vairamuthu are among the 25 people selected for this year's Padma Bhushan. Lyricist Vairamuthu, who holds the unique honour of receiving the President's award for lyricist six times, said he was happy about receiving the Padma Bhushan.

Seventy-six-year old Desai was shortlisted thrice for Booker Prize. She has been selected for her contribution in the field of literature and education.

Cine stars Paresh Rawal and Vidya Balan, sand

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

32

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

artist Sudarsan Pattnaik, theatre artist Bansi Kaul, Chairperson of the Chennai-based Tractors and Farm Equipment (TAFE) Mallika Srinivasan, P. Kilemsungla, and Union Minister Sharad Pawar's brother Pratap Govindrao Pawar, owner of Sakal newspaper group, have been chosen for the Padma Shri.

Ms Kilemsungla, the first woman from Nagaland to be appointed member of the Union Public Service Commission, has been awarded Padma Shri for her contribution to the field of literature and education. Among the other Padma Shri awardees are tabla player Vijay Ghate, filmmaker and cinematographer Santosh Sivan, theatre personality Mohammad Ali Baig, TV actress Nayana Apte Joshi, musician Musafir Ram Bhardwaj, Manipuri dancer Elam Endira Devi, Kathak dancer from Bengal Rani Karnaa, film animator Ram Mohan, dancer Kalamandalam Sathyabhama and former UPSC member Parveen Talha. Ms Talha was the first ever Muslim woman to enter any Class-I civil service through the Civil Services examination. She was also the first Muslim woman to be appointed UPSC member. In sports, tennis star Leander Paes and badminton player-turned-coach Pullela Gopichand have been selected for the Padma Bhushan, while cricketer Yuvraj Singh is among the seven sportspersons chosen for the Padma Shri. Leander Paes, 40, winner of the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna and Arjuna Awards, is the most successful tennis player of the country with 14 Grand Slam titles. He also won India's first Olympic medal in singles at the Atlanta Games in 1996 — a bronze.

Gopichand, one of the finest badminton players in the country, is the second renowned sportsperson to be conferred the Padma Bhushan this year. Squash player Dipika Pallikal, former Indian women's cricket captain Anjum Chopra, Sunil Dabas (kabaddi), Love Raj Singh Dharmshaktu and Mamta Sodha (mountaineering), and H. Boniface Prabhu (wheelchair tennis) are the other sportspersons selected for the Padma Shri. Dharmshaktu has climbed Mount Everest five times. He won the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award in 2003. Boniface Prabhu is one of the pioneers of wheelchair tennis in India. He has competed in all major Grand Slam Wheelchair Tennis Championships.

▷ TOWARDS A RULES-BASED POLICY :

URJIT PATEL COMMITTEE

A Reserve Bank-appointed committee headed by Deputy Governor Urjit Patel was asked to revise and strengthen the monetary policy framework in India. In its core recommendations it wants monetary policy to formally move towards using headline CPI (Consumer Price Index) as its nominal anchor. Communicating the nominal anchor without any ambiguity will be a key task. The objective is to ensure a monetary policy regime shift away from the current approach, which has multiple objectives, to one that is centred on the target CPI. However, taking into account the current macroeconomic scenario, the committee has conceded the need for flexibility in inflation-targeting to enable the central bank to deal with other objectives in the short run. The ultimate goal is to contain CPI inflation within a target band of 4 per cent plus or minus 2 per cent. A smooth two-year transition is envisaged. From the current 10 per cent levels, CPI inflation is to be brought down to 8 per cent in 12 months and to 6 per cent in 24 months. Monetary policy will henceforth be conducted by a new Monetary Policy Committee which will have the Governor as its head and three senior officers of the RBI as its members. In addition, two outside experts will be nominated. All members will vote on the policy at meetings every two months. The MPC will be accountable for any failure to achieve the inflation target.

The committee has suggested crucial changes in the operating framework and instruments in the conduct of monetary policy. Its report has generally been received well by banks and financial markets. It enables policy formulation in a phased and transparent manner using a real policy rate as reference. Over the medium term, the recommendations will help develop a term money market, reduce fluctuations in market liquidity and remove distortions in interest rates. Its unrelenting focus on inflation is justified on several counts — India has the highest rate of inflation among G-20 countries. Inflation expectations are deeply entrenched and inflation at current levels is inimical to medium-term growth and macroeconomic stability. Understandably, Finance Ministry officials

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

are not happy with proposals that would strengthen the central bank's case for complete autonomy in matters of monetary policy. The fact that monetary policy has very little influence over high food inflation that has pushed up the CPI, could limit the efficacy of the new approach. All these do not detract from the fact that a shift to a rules-based policy framework recommended will replace the purely discretionary approach the RBI has followed so far, and is therefore to be welcomed.

▷ STAMPOUT KANGAROO COURTS: SC

The incident in Subalpur village in West Bengal's Birbhum district, in which a 20-year-old tribal woman was gang-raped by a dozen men as punishment for alleged immoral conduct, is shocking in its unimaginable brutality and points to a larger malaise. The order by a kangaroo court led by a village headman is proof that a section of rural India is outside the pale of the country's constitutional values and judicial system. Ill-informed men with medieval social attitudes and patriarchal prejudices are allowed to adjudicate on the conduct and morality of women and pass unconscionable forms of punishment, such as social ostracism, payment of arbitrary fines and, as in this case, sexual violence in lieu of monetary penalty. The Supreme Court and the National Commission for Women have taken *suo motu recognizance* of the incident, which has caused widespread outrage and revulsion. The West Bengal government, which has been sharply criticised in recent times for callousness and insensitivity towards crimes against women, has seen to it that the village headman and the 12 men who raped the hapless woman for a whole night have been arrested. And Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, upset that the police did not seek custody of the accused for questioning and allowed them to be sent to prison directly, has ordered the suspension of the Superintendent of Police. It is disturbing that the entire village, including women, backed the kangaroo court by whose verdict the man could get away with a fine, but the woman was punished for not having the means to do so.

Outposts of feudalism still thrive in vast swathes of rural India, ranging from khap panchayats in the north to caste-based gatherings of village

elders in the south. In 2011, the Supreme Court wanted illegal khap panchayats that encourage 'honour killings' or other institutionalised atrocities to be stamped out ruthlessly. Over a year has elapsed since the country voiced its anger against sexual violence targeted at women and seemed to take a collective vow to ensure the protection of all women. The penal law on sexual violence and harassment has been strengthened significantly since then. Yet, India's cities and villages continue to be unsafe for women. The locus of sexual violence is everywhere: in public spaces and private homes, under the cloak of darkness and in the open, and perpetrated by well-acquainted persons as also as by strangers. The Birbhum incident is a chilling reminder that legal processes, security measures and stringent laws are not enough. Social attitudes need to change, reflecting liberal and humane values, if the country is to ensure gender equality and protection for all its women.

▷ HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT MASKS INTENSE POLITICAL TUSSLE DURING GENEVA-2 TALKS

The tussle over humanitarian assistance to the embattled city of Homs is masking the latent contest for political ascendancy between the opposition and the government during ongoing talks in Geneva.

Syrian government troops dominate Homs — once a focal point of the conflict — but parts of the old city are still under the opposition's control. Analysts say that the government apprehends that the humanitarian steps that are being proposed can be used by the opposition as cover for easing pressure on the besieged militants that are embedded among civilians in pockets inside the city.

BBC is reporting that on Sunday, the Syrian government agreed that women and children could leave, but names of men who wished to relocate needed to be listed. Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said that the armed groups were preventing women and children from leaving, a veiled allegation that opposition fighters were using civilians as cover to hide.

It was unclear whether the opposition, on the defensive in Homs, was relenting to the government's demand to screen and record identities of the men — potentially the most likely

**Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

34

VOL-16

GIST OF THE HINDU

to bear arms or support the opposition in other ways, against the State.

Lakhdar Brahimi, the U.N. and Arab League envoy, said in Geneva that the opposition had agreed to provide lists to the government of detainees that the armed groups were holding. He also hoped that a humanitarian convoy from the U.N. and the Red Cross would enter Homs. Unlike the opposition, the Syrian government seemed wary of making Homs the focal point of discussions that were being routed through Mr. Brahimi, even when the two delegations sat face-to-face across the table in Geneva. Instead, it wanted to target religious extremism.

▷ INDIA TO SEEK RE-ELECTION TO UNHRC

India has said it will seek re-election to the UN's human rights body this year and would continue to strongly push for early reform of the powerful Security Council.

On the occasion of India's 65th Republic Day on Sunday, India's Ambassador to the UN, Asoke Kumar Mukherji, said that India would actively participate in the work of the United Nations during the coming year based on its national objectives and priorities. He said early reform of the UN Security Council will continue to be a "priority" for India, adding that maintenance of international peace and security is also a necessary external environment for India's developmental objectives.

India is currently a member of the 47-nation UN Human Rights Council and its term will end on December 31, 2014. It would seek re-election this year when elections are held in October.

India will compete in the Asia-Pacific category in which four seats will be up for election and so far seven nations have announced their candidature, sources said.

The Council members are elected for a period of three years by the world body's General Assembly, and have the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. Last year, the General Assembly had elected 14 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia and Russia to serve on the Council.

India would also give priority to the implementation of the mandate agreed to by the

international community in the Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Developmental Goals, and "make this work an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda, which will be adopted at the 2015 summit marking the 70th anniversary of the United Nations next year," a statement issued by the Permanent Mission of India here said.

Mukherji underscored that as a founding member of the UN, India has a direct stake in its sustained success. He said India has contributed significant resources to maintaining international peace and security, including providing thousands of Indian peacekeepers, especially in the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

India has also contributed significantly in financial and intellectual resources to the specialised agencies and funds of the United Nations engaged in socio-economic developmental work.

▷ REOPEN THE PATHRIBAL CASE

The Indian Army has not covered itself with glory by closing the cases against the officers involved in the infamous Pathribal fake encounter in Jammu and Kashmir in which five civilians were killed.

Taking over the investigation of the case after an uproar over the 2000 incident, the Central Bureau of Investigation concluded that a Brigadier, a Lieutenant Colonel, two Majors, and a Subedar of 7 Rashtriya Rifles had staged the encounter, picking up civilians from the Anantnag area and killing them in cold blood. They lied to the police that the five were foreign militants who had carried out the massacre of Sikhs in Chattisinghpura a few days earlier. Backed by the Ministry of Defence and the Army top brass, the officers named contested the CBI charge sheet, making the argument that under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, prior sanction was required to prosecute them.

When the legal battle reached its portals, the Supreme Court upheld the officers' case. It also directed the Army to either sanction the prosecution of the officers or court-martial them. The Army was offered the same options back in 2001, but chose to prolong the legal battle. This time, its back to the

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

wall, it chose the latter option. The Army court has egregiously concluded that “the evidence recorded could not establish a prima facie case against any of the accused.” The finding flies in the face of the CBI investigation, but that was only to be expected. The last hope the families of the dead had that justice might be done, lies buried.

It was only in December 2013 that the Army was patting itself on the back for ordering the court martial of three officers involved in the Machhil fake encounter case, citing that as evidence of its willingness to improve its human rights record. But the Pathribal case, through all its legal twists and turns, ending in the exoneration of the accused officers, sends exactly the opposite message. It is a

textbook illustration of why the AFSPA is flawed, and strengthens the case to do away with the provision that requires “previous sanction” from the Central government for prosecution, if not to repeal the law itself. The Army’s whitewash job can only increase resentment against the military in Kashmir, and feed into the sense of alienation. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who understands this well, has rightly said Pathribal “can’t be closed or wished away”. The leader of the National Conference, already criticised as a Congress “stooge”, will have to face the political backlash from the exoneration. If the Centre is serious about winning hearts and minds in Kashmir, it should step in to undo the damage, and find a legal way to reopen the case and pave the way for a civilian trial.

**Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

ONLINE COACHING FOR IAS EXAMS

UPSC PORTAL
www.upscportal.com



- ✓ 24x7 E-learning Access
- ✓ 100% Syllabus Covered
- ✓ at just 100 Rs.per month
- ✓ Discussion Forum, Chat
- ✓ Telephonic Support



Register Now

FREE TRIAL 7 DAY

Online Course for Civil Services Preliminary Examination

- ✓ Online Coaching for CSAT Paper - 1 (GS) 2014
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-pre/csat-paper-1>
- ✓ Online Coaching for CSAT Paper - 2 (CSAT) 2014
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-pre/csat-paper-2>
- ✓ सामान्य अध्ययन प्रारंभिक परीक्षा के लिए ऑनलाइन कोचिंग (पेपर - 1)
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-pre/csat-paper-1-hindi>
- ✓ सीसैट (CSAT) प्रारंभिक परीक्षा के लिए ऑनलाइन कोचिंग (पेपर - 2)
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-pre/csat-paper-2-hindi>

Online Course for Civil Services Mains Examination

- ✓ General Studies Mains (NEW PATTERN - Paper 2,3,4,5)
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-mains-gs>
- ✓ Public Administration for Mains
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-mains-pub-ad>

Online Course for One Day Examination

- ✓ Online Coaching for SSC CGL (Tier-1) Exam
<http://sscportal.in/community/courses/ssc-cgl-tier-1>
- ✓ SSC हिंदी Online Coaching
<http://sscportal.in/community/courses/ssc-cgl-tier-1-hindi>

For Full Information about Online Coaching Click below Link:

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Gist of

YOJANA

▷ TO BEA “TRIBE” IN INDIA

Tribes in India have come to be conceptualized primarily in relation to their geographical and social isolation from the larger Indian society and not in relation to the stage of their social formation. This is why a wide range of groups and communities at different levels of the social formation have all come to be categorized as tribes.

Tribes as citizens of free India were extended civil, political and social rights in equal measure as others. Civil and political rights have been enshrined within the purview of the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution while social rights have been envisaged in the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution.

Beside the ones stated above, tribes were extended certain special rights as being members of a distinct community. Such rights, among other things, include provisions for statutory recognition (article 342); proportionate representation in Parliament and state legislatures (article 19(5)); conservation of one's language, dialects and culture, etc (article 29). The Constitution also has a clause that enables the State to make provision or reservation in general (article 14(4) and in particular, in jobs and appointment in favor of tribal communities (article 16(4)). There is also the Directive Principle of the Constitution that requires that the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of society, including tribes, is especially promoted (Article 46). Besides these, there are provisions in the 5th or 6th schedule of the Constitution (Article 244 and 244 (a) that empower the state to bring the area inhabited by the tribes

under special treatment of administration.

Of all the provisions, protective discrimination has been seen as one of the most important rights given to tribal people.

Despite these provisions, the result is far from satisfactory, more so in the case of scheduled tribes than scheduled castes.

In short, the provision of protective discrimination is not sufficient in itself. To become effective, the provision must be supplemented by what may be called substantive equality i.e. ability, resources and actual opportunity must be created to make the formal equality or in the case of tribes, even protective discrimination, effective.

To reinforce the constitutional provisions for protection of the tribals, two important laws have been enacted in recent years. One was the Provisions of the Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996. The act empowers the scheduled tribes to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and customary mode of dispute resolution through the Gram Sabha.

The other act in the direction has been the “The Scheduled Tribe and other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act, 2006. The act is aimed at undoing the age old injustice done to tribals by restoring and recognizing their pre-existing rights. The recognition and restoration has been, however passing through rough weather in respect of its implementation.

Nehru is credited to have enunciated in a foreword to a book entitled. ‘A Philosophy of NEFA’ by Verier Elwin. Since then, those principles have been taken as the ethos of tribal development in post-independence India. The principles entailed

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

development along the lines of their own genius, respect of tribals' right in land and forest, training and building up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development, not over-administering the areas with a multiplicity of schemes, working through, and not in rivalry, to their social and cultural institutions.

In western, northern and southern India, there has been much more erosion of the tribal language and culture. In eastern India, especially the northeast, the scenario is somewhat better. This has been mainly due to the fact that in north-east India, there was a kind of institutionalized arrangement that facilitated such development. This has received a major boost with the creation of tribal states and autonomous districts.

It is ironical that despite a large number of well meaning constitutional provision and laws aimed at protecting and safeguarding the welfare and interest of the tribal communities, the process of marginalization of the tribals has gone on unabated. Paradoxically, at the root of such marginalization are the laws themselves. Tribes had no tradition of reading and writing and had, hence, no tradition of record keeping and dealing with such laws. The court language and practice had been alien to them. In the absence of such tradition, the non-tribes have taken advantage of such laws and have been depriving tribals of their lands through variety of ways and means.

Tribal rights have come to be scarified to the greater cause of the nation and public interest. In short, those who are in charge of tribal rights are in general insensitive to the constitutional provision and legal entitlements of the tribal communities.

P CLIMATE CHANGE – REASONS AND IT'S SIDE EFFECTS

Climate is the sum of weather trends over a long period of time (say, a century or so). Obviously, weather is short term phenomenon. Since Rio Earth Summit in 1992 as well as UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), it has been widely recognised and accepted that there are various forms of climate change in different parts of the world: increase in summer temperature, shorter but

severe winter, more erratic rainfall distribution, severe and more frequent fog, more frequent occurrence of extreme events like floods and droughts, though total rainfall in a year may be the same, acid rain and so on.

The climate system is defined by the dynamics and interactions of five components – atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, land surface and biosphere. Climate system dynamics is driven by both internal and external forces like volcanic eruptions, solar variations or human induced activities like green house gases or land use changes. It is estimated by various researchers that the world will experience three to four degree Celsius warming by 2100 A.D. According to Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), since 1850 the warmest years were 1998, 2005, 2002, 2003 and 20004 (in descending order). As per UK Meteorological office, global average temperature has been rising by 0.15°C every decade. The period of 2001-2010 was 0.20°C warmer than 1991-2000 decade (that was 0.24°C above 1961-2000 decade (that was 0.24°C above 1961-90 while the period of 2001-2010 was 0.44°C above 1961-90 mean temperature.

Undoubtedly, climate is affected by the multiple factors which are as follows:

- (i) Incident solar radiation-variation with latitude – e.g. high latitude is energy deficit while the low latitude has excess energy.
- (ii) Closeness to large water bodies-distribution of land and water.
- (iii) Mountain barriers – e.g. in Maharashtra, Mumbai and Pune have different mountain scenarios; hence, Pune is colder than Mumbai.
- (iv) Ocean temperature and currents.
- (v) Altitude – higher altitude is colder.
- (vi) Land cover with vegetation and forests.
- (vii) Atmospheric pressure (atmosphere consists of 78.09 per cent nitrogen, 20.95 per cent oxygen. 0.93 per cent CO₂).

Obviously, three main features of climate change are noticeable:

- (a) Deviation from mean magnitudes.
- (b) Phase difference from periodicity.
- (c) Altered frequency of occurrences.

Anthropogenic Activities and Climate Change

**Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

As per IPCC-AR4, various greenhouse gases (namely carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide) since 1750 AD had greater cumulative effect than the agreement emissions of the last ten thousand years. Further, during 1995-2005, the level of carbon dioxide increased by 20 percent.

To be more specific, annual global anthropogenic emission of carbon dioxide increased to approximately 38 Giga tonnes (GT) and by 2010, emissions from fossil fuel burning alone reached 30.6 GT. Further, it is estimated that atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration increased from 280 PPM in pre-industrial era to 390 PPM in 2010-equivalent to 780 GT of carbon dioxide, compared to 560 GT in pre-industrial era. As per Keeling and Sherts, the main driver for about 55 per cent of global warming is this additional carbon dioxide, the balance coming from other GHGs. Needless to emphasize that, nitrous oxide's effect is more dangerous, as impact of one kg of nitrous oxide on global warming is over 300 times that of one kg of carbon dioxide. And, agriculture is the largest source of nitrous oxide emissions.

The situation in India's 'green revolution' belt (Punjab, Haryana and western U.P) has aggravated because the so-called 'miracle' seed of dwarf wheat requires high doses of nitrogenous fertilizer and consequently, there is soil degradation, falling down of water table, salination of water and soil and decline of bio-diversity (rice-wheat monoculture).

As per UN Convention on Biological Diversity, following nature changes are notable:

- (a) Global mean sea level rose by 10-20 cm (present rate of rise is 3 mm per year);
- (b) The overall volume of glaciers in Switzerland decreased by 2/3;
- (c) Arctic ice thickness in late summer and early autumn decreased by about 40 percent;
- (d) Mount Kenya lost 92 percent of its ice mass while Mount Kilimanjaro lost 82 per cent;
- (e) A 40-60 percent decrease in total available water in the large catchment basins of Niger, Lake Chad and Senegal;
- (f) The retreat of 70 percent of sandy shorelines; and
- (g) A northward movement, by some 100kms,

of Alaska's boreal forest line for every one degree rise in temperature.

In absolute terms, china, US, Russia, EU and India are the highest emitting nations.

Table 1: Global GHG Emission in Difference Countries in 2006

S.N.	Country	Total GHG emission (million tons per yr)	Percent of Global GHG emission
1	China	6017	21.8%
2	US	5902	20.3%
3	Russia	1704	05.7%
4	European Union	NA	24.5%
5	India	1293	04.7%

Thus, we may conclude that climate is a major long term problem that requires a long term solution. Hence, all the stakeholders should try to take not only short term (immediate) measures but also, medium term and long term measures by mainstreaming it in all kinds of development initiatives at all levels in a transparent way.

▷ EVIDENCE FROM SOME 'LATEST DEVELOPED' STATES

Of the five states described as 'least developed' by the Report of the Raghuram Rajan Committee on Evolving a Composite Developmental Index, four have a considerably large scheduled tribe population. It is also significant that all these states boast a robust annual growth rate and have pursued aggressive policies which have resulted in the changing class differentiation within tribal people. This differentiation is also a result of the forms of adverse integration of tribal workers into rural and urban labour markets. The increasing labour mobility amongst the scheduled tribe population is reflected in the growing trends of urbanisation and changing intensity of dispossession amongst the tribal people. The root cause of these changing patterns of mobility and rising inequities within tribal communities is the continuing structural changes in the agrarian economy, both in terms of the consolidation of land holdings and the penetration of big capital into export led commercial agriculture. This is particularly true of states like Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh where contract and corporate farming in tribal lands has been a result of sustained'

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

policy initiatives that are consistently linking tribal farmers and rural farmers to national and global markets. Third party industry agreements in joint forest management projects (in states like Andhra) and the promotion of export and industry oriented agricultural produce like. safed musli (for example in Bastar, Chhattigarh), soya bean (through the ITC in Madhya Pradesh) and floriculture in large parts of Chhattigarh has fundamentally changed the agrarian relations within the tribal region.

Forms of Land Dispossession

Ownership and control of land, particularly cultivated land, is one of the basic characteristics of the growing inequities within tribal societies. The decadal changes in the land ownership patterns of four least developed states with tribal population reveal a growing landlessness amongst tribal people in these states in three different periods between 1999-2000 and 2010-11 (a decade that is temporally comparable with the census data enumeration in 2001 and 2011).

Medium size land holdings are getting fragmented and the loss of land amongst the adivasis may not be absolute in its character. This means that those with larger land holdings are losing a significant part of their land but not all their land so as to be classed as 'landless'. Chhattigarh is especially significant in this regard since there seems to be an unusual increase in medium adivasis land holders, a phenomena that has possibly arisen out of the Chhattigarh government's contract farming initiative where adivasis peasants are directly linked to corporate houses. This rise in marginal and medium land holdings at the same time, indicates a fundamental change within the class structure of the Chhattigarh adivasis and can explain the spurt in urban growth rates of adivasis in the state. The secular rise in marginal land holdings has to be seen as a part or the larger proletarianisation of the tribal people.

The importance of the enactment and implementation to the Forest Rights Act has to be considered in this context and perspective. At the time of its enactment, the advocates or tribal rights anticipated that this Act could be an antidote to both displacement and dispossession. But its

implementation when compared with the diversion of forest lands for other projects. serves as a grim reminder of the reality According to the CAG Report on the Implementation of the Compensatory Afforestation scheme in India, Chhattigarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha account for about 51 percent of the diversion of forest lands for corporate projects. If Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan are added to this list then these seven states account for about 70 percent of the land diverted for non-forestry purpose. However, this fact is also accompanied by the lack of recognition of land rights under the Forest Rights Act.

At the scenario for the 'least developed states' is the following:

Of the four least developed states, Jharkhand, Chhattigarh and Madhya Pradesh have a poor record in the settlement of claims under the Forest Rights Act. Chhattigarh and Madhya Pradesh also have the highest rate of diversion of forest lands for non-forestry purpose. Most of this diversion is for the purposes of private mining projects which have a big impact in the displacement of tribal livelihoods. This is clearly seen in the decadal changes in land ownership as shown previously. In fact, in fact, in Madhya Pradesh, landlessness has increased by 23.1 percent in the decade of 2000-2011, and in Chhattigarh by 8.2 percent between 2005 and 2011. This clearly indicates that the class position of the adivasi as a rural worker rather than as a peasant has been further reinforced ever since the post-economic reform period. But today, most adivasis are unable to find gainful employment opportunities in agriculture. Such a conclusion is only reinforced by the Census data of 2011.

The figures for increasing landlessness amongst the tribal people, show it is not surprising that the number of tribal cultivators or peasants have declined by more than 10 per cent in all least developed states except for Odisha, where the rate of decline is less than the all India average of 10.31 per cent. As expected, most of this decline in amongst the tribal farmers of rural areas, but this decrease is also gendered in its character. The rate of decline in female cultivators is higher than that of male cultivators in the rural regions, indicating that female farmers and females headed households face

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

a greater degree of vulnerability. An interesting aspect of changes in work patterns relate to the category of 'other workers'. Here too, the rate of increase in female work participation rate is higher than that of males. Significantly, though there is a secular decline in the category of "other workers" in urban areas, the females urban work participation rates in this period seem to be increasing at an all India level and at least in two of the four least developed states. In states like Odisha, the rate of its decline is small and much lower than the rate of decline of male work participation. This leads us to the conclusion that more women are being forced into the non-agricultural workforce as far as regular work is concerned.

The slow implementation of the Unorganised Sector Workers Social Security Act, 2008 and Forest Rights Act, 2006 will only further hurt the interests of the scheduled tribes in contemporary India.

▷ THE "NEED", COSTS AND ALTERNATIVES TO THE FOOD SECURITY BILL

The Food Security Bill (FSB) is a continuation of the food subsidy system that has been in operation in India for more than 30 years. In this regard, India has extensive experience with the administration of the system, its' likely costs, the proven benefits and the likely benefits.

Some simple math facts about FSB suggest that the facts are plain and that there should be no dispute about the costs of the FSB, as per the letter and spirit of the Bill.

- (1) The bill is expected to provide 60 kg of food-grains (primarily rice and wheat) per cent per year. The grains are to be provided at an average price of Rs. 2.25 per kg to two-thirds of the Indian population (800 million). The production cost of these grains is approximately Rs. 23 per kg, so in simple round numbers, the subsidy is Rs. 20 per kg.
- (2) 60 kg of grain a year for 800 million individuals is 48 million metric tonnes (MMT) of delivery every year. At a subsidy level of Rs. 20000 per tonnes, this amounts to Rs. 96000 crores of subsidy per year.
- (3) A conservative estimate of administration costs of the program, and worked out of the

basis of the existing program, is Rs. 14,000 crores a year.

- (4) There is a buffer stock of about 25 MMT that has to be maintained. That is, an additional cost of Rs. 50,000 crores a year assuming zero costs of interest. (At 10 per cent interest per year, this is an additional Rs. 5000 crores a year).
- (5) So, before the system begins to operate, the costs of implementing the Food Security Bill is Rs. 160,000 crores.

A bare-bones annual subsidy level of Rs. 160,000 crores assumes that there are no leakages in the program, and no corruption. These are extremely unrealistic assumptions. What is the evidence on leakage and corruption in the PDS operation, something India has experience with for more than 30 years? First, the cumulative evidence is that approximately half of the food that leaves the storage godowns of the Food Corporation of India never reaches anybody, rich or poor. So, if the FSB operation had the same level of "efficiency" as the last thirty years, and 5 kg of foodgrains had to be transferred to 800 million instead of the 2.5 kg presently being transferred, this would mean an additional procurement of 24 MMT of foodgrains. Obviously, this is not going to happen; there lies the question of domestic supply and world markets.

How can the government eliminate, or even reduce leakage, in the delivery of foodgrains to the ration shops? There is talk of eventually replacing the PDS system with cash transfers to the targeted 800 million individuals. But cash transfers would mean delivery of cash to the individual, but the individual would still be required to buy food from the ration shop. If not, then the FCI and the PDS system will have to be dismantled in its entirety. While that might be a desirable future, it certainly is not something that is planned, or suggested, by the food Security bill.

The Agriculture Minister himself has indicated that rotten foodgrains amounts to a cost of Rs. 30,000 crores a year. This raises a fundamental question – how come India has individuals capable of sending rockets to mars, unable to store foodgrains efficiently/ the answer is that India has more experience than any other country for storing

foodgrains and it has been doing so for more than 30 years. It is (almost) inconceivable that India does not have the technical knowhow, or land, to build additional silos. Which leaves open the distinct theoretical possibility that food actually does not rot in India, but perhaps is made to rot. What can be gained by allowing food to rot/ the alternative use of rotten food, alternative to the breeding of rats, is as input into the production of liquor.

If this is a reality, then the neatness of the scheme has to be admired. Rotten food does not need to be “accounted” for in a financial sense. But it can accrued as costless inputs in alternative used and costless inputs mean extra profits. So perhaps food is not wasted in India in the strict sense of the word. But rotten food does entail a cost to the public, and the exchequer. Unless the implementation of the FSB has provisions for elimination of rotten food, the cost of rotten food needs to be added to the total subsidy of Rs. 240,000 crores, making Rs. 270,000 crores as the cost of the Food Security Bill.

What is the magnitude of hunger in India today/ there are various estimates. In the main, however, the sources four such estimates are two. The first estimate is the answer to a traditional hunger question in a household survey e.g. did any member of your family not receive two square meals a day in the preceding week (or month). This question was regularly asked in the National Sample Surveys. However, after the 2004-05 NSS survey, this question has been eliminated for the simple reason that a very few household (less than 2 percent of the Indian population) are responding that they are “hungry”. Three decades ago, this proportion was upwards of 10 percent.

The second source of information on hunger is via calorie consumption i.e. if consumption of calories falls below a certain “minimum” level, the individual can be presumed to be hungry. Calorie consumption is a problematic indicator of hunger for several reasons – it varies by age, sex, work load, height, weight, political ideology, etc. Nutrition experts have devised methods to glean information on nutrition, not hunger, from data on calorie consumption, but these derivations remain suspect.

Perhaps the best, and near universal, indicator

of under or malnourishment remains the weight for height indicator for children below the age of 5. And according to this indicator, about 40 percent of children in India are “mal-nourished”.

Intellectual Origins of the Food Security Bill

It is worthwhile to discuss the ideological, political and economic rationale behind the introduction of the PDS system in India. As discussed in detail in Bhalla (2013c), the government involved itself at all levels of production of foodgrains, procurement and distribution. Instead of providing food stamps (as done in the US and Sri Lanka), the government set prices for the farmers, procured grains from the farmers, banned the inter-state movement of foodgrains (a draconian measure only removed in the last decade) and set up eligibility criteria for buying subsidized criteria for buying subsidized foodgrains. Predictably, there was a black market, and in some states, the number of ration card holders exceeded the population.

But the comic-tragic corruption story did not end there. The government story did not end there. The government wanted more domestic foodgrain production to make its number one anti-poverty program a success. So it allowed fertilizer subsidies to explode. But along with fertilizer, the new technology needed an assured water supply. So water was subsidized; but irrigation needed power, so power was subsidized. All this has added up to possibly the most corrupt anti-poverty program in the world.

Why the need for a Food Security Bill?

There were three arguments made in favour of the Food Security Bill by the sponsors (politicians and academics) of the bill. The first and most important defence of the bill was that it would substantially reduce, if not eliminate, hunger. However, as shown above, there is no statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that even 5 percent of the population suffers from hunger problems, let alone 67 percent for whom the bill provides subsidized food. The second defence of the bill was that a substantial number of Indians are poor and they need food to reduce their poverty. But the

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

42

VOL-16

GIST OF YOJANA

most recent NSS 2011-12 survey results point to only 22 percent of the population of India as poor. So if a program was devised to help the bottom third of the population, it would be credible, but there seems little logic in starting a food rights program for two-thirds of the population to help less than the bottom one-third.

The remains the argument of malnourishment of children. The reality of malnourishment of a substantial percentage of Indian children cannot be denied or ignored. Indeed, statistics suggest that the weight for height of Indian children is worse than the poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa. But it is not obvious how the FSB will help in decreasing the malnourishment of children. Recent research (e.g. Spears (2012)) has shown that the major contributor to malnourishment is the lack of water and absence of sanitation. India has the largest proportion of open defecation (close to 50 percent), and this explains high child malnourishment in India despite the fact that it is now a middle income country.

Alternatives to Food Security Bill

Expenditure

An important counter-factual for Indian policy makers is for them to imagine, or estimate, what would have been the status of poor, malnourished individuals if money spent on welfare programs for the poor were spent on alternative programs? For several years now, India has spent upwards of 2 percent of GDP each year on “in the name of the poor” schemes. (this is before the advent of the FSB and includes food programs like PDS, employment programs like NREGA, and subsidies for fertilizer to advance agriculture production). Assume for a moment that half of this money was to be spent on water and sanitation projects. Until recently, India spent about 4 percent of GDP on infrastructure investment (today that fraction is close to 7 percent). Spending half percent of GDP would have been a small amount of investment per se, but a large amount of investment for the poor. This investment would have borne benefits in terms of better nutrition, higher productivity, lower costs of health care, higher incomes, and lower poverty. And with very little leakage and no more than the normal quota of corruption for public sector contracts. That

this did not happen is a “tribute” to the highly elitist system of programs and schemes for the poor – schemes, that as Rajiv Gandhi said, do not benefit much the presumed beneficiaries – the poor.

P SABLA: THE ROAD TO EMPOWERMENT AND SELF ESTEEM FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Adolescence is a phase during which major physical and psychological changes take place in children, along with changes in their social perceptions and expectations. This is the time that they need the maximum understanding and caring.

There are nearly 1.2 billion adolescents in the world, that is, those aged between 10 to 19 years.

Women constitute nearly half of the population of the country, but gender disparities in socio-cultural spheres have adversely affected a balanced equitable development. These disparities get reflected in important social development indicators such as health, nutrition, literacy, education attainments, skill levels, occupational status and so on. The same is also reflected in the situation of the adolescent girl. Almost 50 percent of women marry before the legal age of 18 verses 10 percent of young men. Overall, one in six women in the age group of 15-19 have begun childbearing. Early childbearing is most common in rural areas and among women with no education. Around 41 percent of all maternal deaths take place among those aged 15-24 years. 56 percent adolescent girls are anemic (verses 30 percent adolescent boys). Anemic adolescent mothers are at a higher risk of miscarriages, maternal mortality and still-births and low-weight babies. The drop-out rates among the girls are quite high. 21 percent adolescent girls and 8 percent adolescent boys have no education.

Adolescent girls are a core resource for national growth. Investment in their health and development is investment in the greater well-being of the country. Considering that several of these girls are out of school, get married early, face discrimination in accessing health, education and other services, work in vulnerable situations, and are influenced by peer pressure, they need special attention. The public health challenges for adolescents, which include pregnancy, risk of maternal and infant mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, reproductive tract infections, rapidly rising

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

incidence of HIV, etc., require to be brought to the attention of adolescent girls (AGs). They need to be looked at in terms of their needs both as a group as well as individuals as they are the productive members of the society in future. Recognizing the unmet need of AGs, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls — Sabha has been launched as a comprehensive intervention for Adolescent girls in the age-group of 11-18 years, with a focus on out of school girls. The scheme is now operational in 205 districts across the country on a pilot basis.

Using the ICDS platform, this scheme is reaching out to nearly 1 crore adolescent girls between 11 – 18 years of age with an integrated package of services. *Sabla* aims at all-round development of adolescent girls of 11-18 years (with a focus on all out-of-18 years (with a focus on all out-of-school AGs) by making them 'self reliant'. At the Anganwadi Centre, supplementary nutrition providing 600 Kcal and 18-20 g of protein and micronutrients is provided every day either as hot cooked meal or as take home rations to out of school adolescent girls in 11-14 years age group and all girls between 14-18 years for 300 days in a year.

In addition, out of school adolescent girls are being provided non-nutrition services which include life skills education, supervised weekly iron and folic acid (IFA) tablets, supplementation and nutrition counseling, sexual and reproductive health education and counseling, skills in leadership, problem solving,

decision making and accessing public services. Every girl enrolled in Sabla is given a Kishori Card, an entitlement tool to monitor girls, access to and uptake of the services under Sabla. The non-nutrition services under the Sabla programme interventions also reach out to the non-school going adolescent girls through adolescent groups i.e., Kishori Samooh meetings. Each adolescent group comprises of 15 – 25 adolescent girls led by peer leaders i.e., Kishori Sakhi and their two associates i.e., Sahelis. The Sakhis and Sahelis are imparted training and serve as peer monitor/educator for adolescent girls.

Tamil Nadu is doing very well in Sabla but Delhi has shown poor performance, evidence suggests. In Delhi, they don't have enough Sabla kits and Sabla registers have not been maintained. Publicity material has also not been printed. In some states, the funds are available but they are not being properly absorbed. Whatever little is there, is not being used.

Sabla endeavours to have adolescent girls with enhanced self esteem and improved nutrition and health status. It aims to provide them with enhanced skills and the capacity to make informed choices. Through various schemes including Sabla, the government is investing in the health, nutrition and development needs of adolescent girls to advance their rights to education, health and protection. This will help them to build a future of gender equality and justice.

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>



UPSCPORTAL's Study Kits for Civil Services & Other Examinations

- ➔ Medium: English
- ➔ 100% Syllabus Covered
- ➔ Available in Hard Copy

Study Kit for Preliminary Examinations:

- ✓ IAS (Pre) GS Paper 1
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-pre/csat-paper-1>
- ✓ IAS (Pre) GS Paper 2
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-pre/csat-paper-2>
- ✓ आई. ए. एस. (सामान्य अध्ययन) प्रारंभिक परीक्षा 2014 पेपर -1
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-pre/csat-paper-1-hindi>
- ✓ आई. ए. एस. (सी-सैट) प्रारंभिक परीक्षा 2014 पेपर -2
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-pre/csat-paper-2-hindi>
- ✓ GS Foundation Course (PT+ MAINS) for 2014
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-pre/general-studies-foundation-course>
- ✓ सामान्य अध्ययन (GS) फ़ाउंडेशन कोर्स (पी. टी. + मुख्य)
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-pre/gf-foundation-course-hindi>

Study Kit for Mains Examinations:

- ✓ Contemporary Issues
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/contemporary-issues-ias-mains>
- ✓ Public Administration
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-mains-public-adminstration>
- ✓ Essay Writing
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/essay-mains>
- ✓ English Grammar & Comprehension
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-mains-english-compulsory>
- ✓ History
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-mains-history>
- ✓ Philosophy
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-mains-philosophy>
- ✓ Sociology
<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/ias-mains-sociology>
- ✓ General Studies
<http://www.upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/gf-mains>

Study Kit for UPSC Other Examinations:

✓ Armed Police Forces (CAPF)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit/capf>

Study Kit for Other One Day Examinations:

✓ SSC Combined Graduate Level (Tier - I)

<http://sscportal.in/community/study-kit/cgl>

✓ सीजीएल (टियर-1) अध्ययन सामग्री

<http://sscportal.in/community/study-kit/cgl/tier-1-hindi>

✓ SSC Combined Graduate Level Examination (Tier - II)

<http://sscportal.in/community/study-kit/cgl-tier-2>

✓ SSC Combined Higher Secondary Level (10+2) Examination

<http://sscportal.in/community/study-kit/chsle>

✓ IBPS Specialist Officer Study Kit

<http://bankpoclerk.com/community/study-kit/ibps-specialist-officer>

✓ IBPS Probationary Officer (PO) Study Kit

<http://bankpoclerk.com/community/study-kit/ibps-po>

✓ IBPS Clerk Study Kit

<http://bankpoclerk.com/community/study-kit/ibps-clerk>

For Full Information about Study Kits Click below Link:

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/study-kit>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Gist of

KURUKSHETRA

▷ PANCHAYATI RAJ – THREE TIER SYSTEM IN INDIA

The Panchayati Raj is a South Asian Political system mainly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The word “Panchayat” literally means “assembly” of five wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community.

Panchayati Raj is a system of governance in which gram Panchayats are the basic units of administration. Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayati Raj, a decentralized form of government. It is the oldest system of local government in the Indian sub continent. This system was adopted by state governments during the 1950s and 60s as laws were passed to establish Panchayats in various states. It also found backing in Indian constitution with the 73rd Amendment in 1992 to accommodate the idea. In the history of Panchayati Raj in India, on 24th April, 1993, the constitution (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions.

The Three-Tier System of Panchayati Raj in India

The states of Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim have two-tier Panchayats – one at the village level and the second at the zila or District level. In all other states Panchayati Raj is a three-tier system-village as first level, block or janapad as second level and zila or district as the third level.

Village Level

Village is the basic unit of Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is generally a revenue unit. The unit of local government here is called village Panchayat.

In the structure of the Panchayati Raj, the village Panchayat is the lowest unit. The Panchayat chiefly consists of representatives elected by the people of the village.

Only the persons who are registered as voters and do not hold any office of profit under the government are eligible for election to the Panchayat. The persons convicted by the court for criminal offences are disqualified from election of the Panchayat.

There is also provision for co-option of two women and one member of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, if they do not get adequate representation in the normal course.

The Panchayat as a body is accountable to the general body of the village known as Gram Sabha which meets at least twice a year. The Gram Panchayat must present its budget, accounts of the previous year and annual administrative report before the Gram Sabha. Furthermore, it has to secure the latter's approval of the village production plan, proposals for taxation and development programmes before they are enforced by the Panchayat.

Every Panchayat elects a president or Sarpanch and a Vice-President or Up-Sarpanch. The Sarpanch occupies a pivotal position in gram Panchayat system. He supervises and coordinates the various activities of the Panchayat. The Panchayat secretary and the village level worker are the two officers at the Panchayat level to assist the Sarpanch in administration

Functions

1. **Mandatory Function:** Sanitation, conservancy and drainage, prevention of

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

- public nuisances, drinking water, construction and maintenance of village roads, public buildings, registration of births and deaths, maintenance of cremation and burial grounds, rural electrification, poverty alleviation programme, preparation of annual budget and development plans, construction and maintenance of cattle sheds, ponds etc. social farm forestry, fuel and fodder, slaughter focuses, public parks and playgrounds, agriculture, poultry and fisheries etc.
2. **Discretionary Functions:** Agriculture, animal husbandry and dairy development, minor irrigation, small scale industries, housing, electricity and non-conventional energy, rural development programmes, education cultural affairs and heritage, public health etc.

Source of Revenue

A gram Panchayat fund has been created on the pattern of consolidated fund of the state. All money received by the Gram Panchayat like contribution of grants made by the State Government, Union Government, Zila Parishad and all sums received by the Panchayat in the form of taxes, rates, duties, fees, loans, fines and penalties, compensation, court decree, sale proceeds and income from Panchayat etc. go into that fund.

Village Panchayats have been empowered to levy taxes of fees on subjects like houses and buildings, professions, trades, callings and employments, fees on registration of vehicles, fairs and meals, sanitary arrangement, water, tax, lighting tax, tax on sale of firewood.

Block Level

Block or Union is the second or intermediate level of local self government in rural India. It has been named differently in different states. In Andhra Pradesh, it is known as Mandal Parishad, in Assam, it is known as Anchalik Panchayat, in Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan it is known as Panchayat Samiti and so on.

Usually, a Panchayat Samiti consists of 20 to 60 villages depending on area and population. The Panchayat Samiti generally consists of the following:

1. About twenty members elected by and from the Panches of all the Panchayats falling in the block area.
2. Two women members and one member each from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be co-opted.
3. Two local persons possessing experience of public administration, which may be beneficial for the rural development.
4. Representatives of the co-operatives working within the jurisdiction of the block.
5. One representative elected by and from the members of each small municipality lying within the geographical limits of a block.
6. The members of the State and Union legislatures representing the area are to be taken as associate members.

The President of the Panchayat Samiti is the Pradhan, who is elected by an electoral college consists of all members of the Panchayat Samiti and all the Panchas of the Gram Panchayat falling within the panchas areas. Besides the Pradhan, the Up-pradhan is also elected. The Pradhan convenes and presides over the Panchayats in making plans and carrying out production programmes. He ensures the implementation of the decision and resolutions of the Samiti and its standing committees. He exercises administrative control over the Vikas Adhikari (BDO) and his staff. He is a member of the Zila Parishad by virtue of his office as a Pradhan. He is the ex-officio chairman of the standing committees of the Samiti.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Panchayat Samiti, the Block Development Officer is entrusted with the responsibility for implementing the resolutions of the Samiti and its Standing Committees. He prepares the budget of the Samiti and places it before the Samiti for approval. Preparing the annual report of the Samiti and sending it to the Zila Parishad and State Government also comes within the purview of his responsibility. He is accountable to the president of the Samiti for his action.

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Functions

The principal function of the Panchayat Samiti is to co-ordinate the activities of the various Panchayats within its jurisdiction. The Panchayat Samiti supervises the work of the Panchayats and scrutinizes their budgets. It also reserves the right to suggest measures for improving the functioning of the Panchayats. The Samiti is charged with the responsibility of preparing and implementing plans for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, small scales and cottage industries, rural health etc.

District Level

Generally, the Zila Parishad consist of representatives of the Panchayat Samiti, all members of the State Legislative and the Parliament representing a part or whole of the district, all district level officers of the medical, Public Health, Public Works, Engineering, Agriculture, Education and other development departments.

There is also a provision for special representation of women, members of Scheduled Casts and Scheduled Tribes provided they are not adequately represented in the normal course. The collector is also a member of the Zila Parishad.

The term of each District Panchayat is five years unless dissolved earlier. In most of the States their meeting must be held at least once in three months. However, in Goa, Haryana and Karnataka their meetings must be called at least once in two months.

Functions

The Zila Parishad, performs coordinating and supervisory functions. It co-ordinates the activities of the Panchayat Samiti falling within its jurisdiction. In certain states the Zila Parishad also approves the budgets of the Panchayat Samitis.

The Zila Parishad also renders necessary advice to the Government with regard to the implementation of the various development schemes. It is also responsible for the maintenance of primary and secondary schools, hospitals, dispensaries, minor irrigation works etc. It also promotes local industries and art.

Source of Revenue

The legislation of all states provide for the certain of separate Zila Parishad/District Panchayat Fund which is like the consolidated Fund of the State. The sources of income of the Zila Parishad / District Panchayat are:

- (i) Grants-in-aid given by the State Government and the Union Government (general or for any particular project)
- (ii) Donations and incomes like rent or lease or sale proceeds of the properties of the Parishad.
- (iii) Toll, fees or cess imposed on bridges, ferries, entertainment, fairs, haats etc.
- (iv) Share of the land revenue assigned to the Parishad.
- (v) Several states like U.P., Punjab, Manipur, Maharashtra etc. have empowered them to levy taxes on any matter on which Panchayats at the lower levels are empowered to do.
- (vi) Loans raised by it against the security of its properties.
- (vii) Contributions made by Panchayat Samitis or any other local authority.

P GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME TO EMPOWER PANCHAYATI RAJ

To accelerate rural development process, Government legislated the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, which became the Panchayati Raj law on April 24, 1993. Since then it became mandatory to involve local people and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to implement Government schemes and make them responsible to achieve the underlying objectives. The Law stipulated reservation for women and disadvantaged section of the community, which created a space for them to be assertive and demand their rightful share in the decision-making at the local level. The 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution (1992) has made Panchayats the third tier of the Indian political system. Earlier we had only two tiers-the Union Government and the State Governments. Now we have three tiers-the Panchayats at the village block and district levels. The year 2009-10 had been declared as the year of Gram Sabha being the 50th anniversary of launching of Panchayati Raj in our country.

Panchayati Raj System in India

1. **B.R. Mehta Committee:** The Panchayat were a subject of study by a number of committees and study teams starting with the B.R. Mehta Committee recommending a three-tier Panchayati Raj structure.
2. **L.M. Singhvi Committee:** In 1986 the L.M. Singhvi Committee studied Panchayati Raj, and suggested that Gram Sabha be the base of a decentralized democracy and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) viewed as institutions of self-governance which would actually facilitate participation of people in the process of planning and development. It also recommended constitutional recognition of local self-government and inclusion of a new chapter in the Constitution for this purpose. The 73rd Amendment included the Gram Sabha as the basis of the three-tier Panchayati Raj. Constitutional provisions, however, related to the establishment, power, functions and responsibilities of the Panchayats have been introduced through the 73rd Amendment in 1993 for the country as a whole following the recommendations of L.M. Singhvi Committee.

Statutory Panchayats: The Statutory Panchayats were created by law. These laws are given as follows:

1. **Royal Commission on Decentralization (1907):** These owe their origin to the Report of the Royal Commission had recommended the creation of village Panchayats for reducing the financial burden of the provincial governments and for extending the concept of local self government to the village level.
2. **Mayo's Resolution (1870) and Ripon Resolution (1882):** The Mayo's Resolution (1870) had created the municipalities in the urban areas and the Ripon Resolution (1882) the district board at the district level and the rural self government institutions.
3. **Village Panchayat Act (1912):** The objective of this Act was to strengthen the Panchayats both as units of Local Self

Government and as judicial bodies. However, the enactment of this act failed to have the desired results. This happened because the Panchayats setup under this act had neither a real representative character nor any element of autonomy. Secondly, those who were responsible for executing it, too could not be spared from their due share of blame. The failure may partly be attributed to the lack of sincerity on their part. Thirdly, the blame may also be squarely placed on people who exhibited much apathy for this institution.

Government Programme for Empowerment of Panchayati Raj

1. **Powers of Gram Sabha through Panchayats Act, 1996 (PESA):** The Provision of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA) extends Part IX of the Constitution with certain modifications and exceptions, to the Fifth Schedule areas of 9 States viz. Andhra Pradesh (AP), Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan. The Gram Sabhas under PESA are deemed to the 'competent' to safeguard and preserve the traditions of the people, community resources and customary mode of dispute resolution. The Gram Sabhas further have:
 - (i) Mandatory executive functions to approve plans of the Village Panchayats, identify beneficiaries for schemes, issue certificates of utilization of funds.
 - (ii) Right to mandatory consultation in matter of land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation and prospecting licenses/mining leases for minor minerals.
 - (iii) Power to prevent alienation of land and restore alienated land.
 - (iv) Power to regulate and restrict sale/consumption of liquor.
 - (v) Power to manage village markets,

- control money lending to STs.
- (vi) Ownership of minor forest produce.
 - (vii) Power to control institutions and functionaries in all social sectors.
 - (viii) Power to control local plans and resources for such plans including TSP, etc.
2. **Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA):** Participation of women in the Panchayats was facilitated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment which mandated one-third reservation of seats at all three tiers of Panchayats for women. The Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan aims to build on the substantial representation of women and youth in Panchayats so that they use their collective strength more effectively. It supports the efforts of the many isolated, strengthen their unity and provide a forum for continued training. PMEYSA provides women with specific kinds of support which goes beyond the usual training given to PRI representatives.
3. **Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS):** The Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) is a Central Sector Plan Scheme implemented by the MoPR since 2005-06. The scheme aims at encouraging states to adequately empower Panchayats and put in place systems for bringing about accountability of the PRIs. Performance of states in these respects is measured through a Devolution Index (DL).
4. **e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP):** MoPR has been adopting a multi-pronged strategy to implement the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution in the true spirit of cooperative federalism. One major strategy has been to harness the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for e-Governance in Panchayats. The objective is to make Panchayats more efficient,

transparent and symbols of modernity by leveraging ICT at the cutting edge level to ensure transparency and accountability in their functioning through disclosure of information, social audit, efficient delivery of services and improving internal processes and management of Panchayats.

5. **Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sastikaran Abhiyan: RGPASA** seeks to enhance capacities and effectiveness of Panchayats and Gram Sabha and enable democratic decision making and accountability in Panchayats and promote people's participation.

PRIs and Centrally Sponsored Schemes for Poverty Alleviation

1. **Accelerated Rural Water Supply Program (ARWSP) and Swajaldhara:** The main programme of the Central Government related to drinking water supply is the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Program (ARWSP) and Swajaldhara. ARWSP is aimed at ensuring a minimum availability of 40 Litres of water per capita per day (LPCD) to all rural people. Swajaldhara is a demand driven approach to augmenting water supply, with a high degree of local participation. ARWSP is now part of the Bharat Nirman Approach, with a time bound strategy of tackling all habitations that are deficient in water supply.
2. **Total Sanitation Campaign:** The Total Sanitation Campaign aims at providing subsidized individual and community latrines, so as to completely eliminate open-air defecation. The program has now added solid waste management as another component of the program.
3. **National Rural Health Mission:** The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM 2005-2012) has been launched to improve availability of and access to quality health care and public health services, including women's health, child health, water, sanitation and hygiene, immunization, and

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

- nutrition by rural people, through making necessary changes in the mechanism of health delivery. The goals of the mission are to reduce infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) and prevent and control communicable and non-communicable diseases.
4. **Integrated Child Development Programme:** ICDS promotes integrated child development through converging basic services for improved child care, early stimulation and learning, improved enrolment and retention, health and nutrition, and water and environmental sanitation. The Scheme aims at improving the nutritional and health status of pre-school children, pregnant women and nursing mothers.
 5. **Indira Awas Yojana:** The Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) is the sole program that deals with housing for the poor from the Government of India. This program gives a 100 percent subsidy, capped at Rs. 25,000 per unit per unit for providing houses to families below the poverty line. Beneficiaries are to construct the house and payments are made directly to the beneficiary, on the completion of certain milestones in construction.
 6. **Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidhyutikaran Yojana:** The Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidhyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) is the major rural electrification scheme of the Ministry of Power, which aims at providing electricity in all village and habitations in four years and provides access to electricity to all rural households. This program is one of the major components of Bharat Nirman. The approach is to strengthen the electricity distribution infrastructure by establishing Rural Electricity Distribution Backbone (REDB) with at least a 33/11 KV sub-station, Village Electrification Infrastructure (VEI) with at least a Distribution Transformer in each village or hamlet, and stand-alone grids with generation where grid supply is not feasible.

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Pre GS 2014



- ✓ 24x7 E-learning Access
- ✓ 100% Syllabus Covered
- ✓ at just 100 Rs.per month
- ✓ Quiz, Forum, Chat
- ✓ Telephonic Support

Register Now

FREE TRIAL 7 DAY



UPSC PORTAL
www.upscportal.com

Online Coaching for IAS PRE GS 2014 (at just 100 Rs per month)

What candidate will get:

1. All the relevant and required materials of subjects mention in the GS syllabus like:

- 100% IAS Exam Syllabus Covered with MCQs.
- History of India and Indian National Movement.
- Indian and World Geography - Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.
- Indian Polity and Governance - Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- Economic and Social Development -Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector initiatives, etc.
- General issues on Environmental Ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change - that do not require subject specialisation
- General Science.
- Current Affairs.

2. Home assignment: where Multiple Choice Questions of the learned chapters will be given for self evaluation.

3. Important current affairs materials for civil services preliminary examination will be provided

4. Online Tests will be conducted after the end of each subject.

5. At the end of your course, five comprehensive test will be conducted to evaluate your performance.

Click Here to Join IAS (Pre.) Online Coaching:

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses/ias-pre/csat-paper-1>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Gist of

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

VVIP CHOPER AGREEMENT

The Government of India has terminated with immediate effect the Agreement that was signed with M/s. AgustaWestLand International Ltd. (AWIL) on 08 February, 2010 for the supply of 12 VVIP/VIH helicopters on grounds of breach of the Pre-contract Integrity Pact (PCIP) and the Agreement by AWIL.

Based on the opinion received earlier from the Attorney General of India, it has been the view of the Government that integrity-related issues are not subject to arbitration. However, AWIL has since pressed for arbitration and appointed an arbitrator from its side. In view of this, MoD sought afresh the opinion of the Attorney General. With a view to safeguard the interests of the Government, MoD has nominated Hon'ble Mr Justice BP Jeevan Reddy as its arbitrator.

PARAM SUPERCOMPUTER

The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) has achieved a significant milestone with PARAM Yuva II supercomputer being ranked 1st in India, 9th in the Asia Pacific Region and 44th in the world among the most power efficient computer systems as per the Green500 List announced at the Supercomputing Conference (SC'2013) in Denver, Colorado, USA.

Supercomputers, in general, consume a lot of electrical power and produce much heat that necessitates elaborate cooling facilities to ensure proper operation. This adds to increase in the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of a supercomputer. To draw focus towards development of energy efficient supercomputers, Green500 ranks computer systems in the world according to compute performance per

watt, thus providing a world ranking based on energy efficiency.

Energy consumed by supercomputers is measured at various Levels – L1, L2, L3 - for purpose of reporting. As the level increases, accuracy and rigor of measurement exercise also increases. It is also a measure of our capability and noteworthy that C-DAC is the second organization worldwide to have carried out the Level 3 measurement of Power versus Performance for the Green500 List.

PARAM Yuva – II uses hybrid technology – processor, co-processor and hardware accelerators - to provide the peak compute power of 520.4 Teraflop/s using 210 kiloWatt power. The interconnect network comprises of homegrown PARAMNet-III and Infiniband FDR System Area Network. This system is designed to solve large and complex computational problems. The system has 200 Terabytes of high performance storage, and requisite system software and utilities for parallel applications development.

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BILL, 2013

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 has been in force for over 17 years. In order to harmonize the provisions of this Act in line with the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the Act has been reviewed and a new Bill namely Rights of Persons Disabilities Bill, 2013 was finalized after extensive consultations with the Central Ministries/ Departments, State Governments/UTs and various stakeholders. Accordingly, the Department moved a

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

**Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Cabinet Note on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2013 to replace the existing Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 on 11.12.2013. The Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 12.12.2013 approved the proposed RPwD Bill, 2013.

SECURITY FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC ROAD TRANSPORT IN THE COUNTRY

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved setting up of a unified system at the national level (National Vehicle Security and Tracking System) and State level (City Command and Control Centre) for Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking of the location of emergency buttons in and video recording of incidents in public transport vehicles, in 32 cities of the country with a population of one million or more according to the 2011 census.

The implementation of the project will help in:

- (i) Mapping of routes of public vehicles;
- (ii) Tracking of vehicles on the route;
- (iii) Highlighting of violations through visual and text signals;
- (iv) Panic button alert to transport and police through visual, text and voice.
- (v) Permit, registration and licence cancellation based criteria for enforcement.
- (vi) Providing safety and security to women / girl child in distress in minimum response time.

The total estimated cost of the project will be Rs.1405 crore. The project will be implemented within a period of two years after allocation of funds to set up a National Level Vehicle Security and Tracking System and City Command & Control Centre with installation of GPS / CCTV / Panic buttons in public road transport.

The scheme for security for women in public road transport has been formulated with purpose of improving safety and protection of women from violence by using information technology in the following manner:

I. Tracking of all public transport vehicles: This shall be done in accordance with Sections 72, 74, 75 and 76 of Central Motor Vehicle Act, 1988. Defaults will be reported and updated on the data

base of the vehicle.

II. Emergency button in all public transport vehicles: The button will generate an alarm in the system. For vehicles which are also provided with facilities for video recording, the City Command and Control Centre can receive pictures of actual incidents and raise an alarm with the nearest police and transport patrol to reach the bus.

III. Video recording in public transport vehicles with large seating capacity: Incidents recorded will be kept for seven days in the on-board unit and can be used as evidence and arrest of accused in case of any incident.

Background

Women play an important role in the economy, politics and social sectors of a country. People from smaller towns, including a large number of women, move to cities in search of jobs or studies. With increasing participation of women in the economic sphere, safer mobility of women is essential. As most people, particularly women and the girl child, cannot afford their own transportation, they depend on public transport.

The Justice JS Verma Committee constituted in December, 2012 to look into the possible amendments in the criminal laws related to sexual violence against women made various recommendations for public transport vehicles in its report.

The Report of Justice (Retired) Ms. Usha Mehra, Commission of Enquiry constituted under the Commission of Enquiry Act, 1952 to look into the incident of gang-rape and assault on a woman on 16.12.2012 in Delhi suggested measures for safety and security of women in the NCT of Delhi and NCR.

CRITERIA FOR GIVING ARJUNA AWARD

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has finalized the criteria for giving Arjuna Award to the sportspersons. The criteria would be applicable for selection of sportspersons for Arjuna Awards for the year 2014 onwards. Following is the new criteria:

- 90 % weightage will be given for the medals won in various International championships and sports events of the disciplines covered in Olympic Games (Summer, Winter and

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

52

VOL-16 GIST OF PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

- Paralympics), Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Points for winning medals will be given to each eligible sportsperson for his/her performance during the last 4 years.
- Equivalence of any other sports discipline/tournament, will be decided by the Selection Committee with reference to above-mentioned six categories of sports tournaments and the points will be allotted accordingly.
 - 90 marks will be given to the sportsperson getting maximum points as computed in the table above. Rest of the sportspersons will be given marks proportionately to the said sportsperson. For example, if a sportsperson 'A' has got highest points say 45 points as per the table above and another sportsperson 'B' has got 40 points as per the table above, then 'A' will get 90 marks and 'B' will get $(90 \times 40 / 45) = 80$ marks.
 - 10 % weightage will be given to the marks given by the Selection Committee for assessment of the eligible sportsperson keeping in view factors like profile and standard of the sports events in which he or she has won medals and qualities like leadership, sportsmanship, team spirit, fair play, sense of discipline.
 - Winners of medals in Olympics and Paralympics will automatically be considered for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna or Arjuna Awards, depending on the type of medal won, if they have already not been conferred with either of the two Awards.
 - For cricket and indigenous games, not included in Olympic / Asian Games / Commonwealth Games disciplines, the Selection Committee will recommend the number of awards, (not exceeding two), to be given for Cricket/Indigenous Games and recommend the sportspersons taking into consideration their individuals performances and qualities of sportsman spirit, leadership, sense of discipline etc.
 - Ordinarily, not more than one award will be given in each discipline in a particular year subject to deserving sportspersons being available. Adequate representation would be insured for physically challenged and women.
 - The principle of one award per discipline will not be applicable in case of team sports and across gender. That is to say that, the Selection Committee may recommend, in deserving cases with proper justification, more than one sportsperson in respect of team sports and sportspersons of both the genders.
 - Normally not more than 15 awards could be given in any calendar year. However, keeping in view the performance of Indian sportspersons in the Commonwealth, Asian Games and Olympic Games during a particular year and for the reasons given in para 7 above, Selection Committee may recommend more than 15 sportspersons for Arjuna Award.
 - In a particular sports discipline, names of not more than 4 sportspersons (2 male and 2 female) with the highest marks as per the criteria brought out in the table above will be considered by the Selection Committee.
 - Sometimes, the Selection Committee may feel that as per the given criteria, a very deserving sportsperson may not get Arjuna Award. In such a situation, it may recommend such name giving full justification in writing.
 - Selection Committee will recommend the final list of sportspersons for Arjuna Awards as per the marks obtained in terms of the criteria indicated above.
 - The recommendations of Selection Committee will be placed before the Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports for the final decision.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS-2014

India's efforts to engage with the India Diaspora received a shot in the arm when the three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas from January 7, 2014 to January 9, 2014 is organised in Delhi at Vigyan Bhawan which sought to connect persons of Indian

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

origin and non-resident Indians across generations. The main event was inaugurated on January 8, 2014 by the Prime Minister of India.

The President of India, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, delivered the valedictory address on January 9th and conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards.

The PBD Convention provides a unique platform for overseas Indians to interact among themselves and with the Government of India and the Governments of various Indian States. It is forum where the Government of India showcases investment opportunities in India and its potential in various sectors.

Sh Ravi said that the key focus area of PBD 2014 is Youth PBD on January 7th. India is fast emerging as a youthful and exuberant nation where approximately 50 percent of the working population falls in the age group 18-35 years. There has been a sharp reversal in migration trends and a number of experienced and educated NRIs are now returning home to use their knowledge to build an inclusive and economically sound future for the country. This led to the creation of a unique synergy where in young Indians worldwide are now set to shape the future of the Indian growth story. This synergy is expected to be directed by the core principal of inclusive prosperity and driven by innovation and technology.

The final day of PBD witnessed sessions on 'Investment Opportunities in State' and "Parallel State Sessions' Concurrent sessions on 'Innovation and Technology'; 'Healthcare Opportunity in India'; 'Meeting of Diaspora organization'; 'Making India the Hub of Media & Entertainment Industry' and "Issues of NRIs in the Gulf".

PBD 2014 showcased the participation of the state governments, corporate, financial institutions, NGOs and other sectors through the Exhibition that is behind the Vigyan Bhawan.

PRITHVI LAUNCH SUCCESSFUL

A missile unit of the elite Strategic Forces Command (SFC) successfully launched a Prithvi missile from the test range at Chandipur, off the Odisha Coast as part of a scenario based live launch training exercise. The launch was flawless and achieved all its targeting and technical parameters set out for the training exercise.

'The launch was conducted as a culmination to a strategic training exercise. The aim of this exercise was to validate our readiness by undertaking launches in various contingencies', said an SFC spokesperson.

Prithvi missiles are indigenously produced and are equipped with improved high accuracy navigation and manoeuvring system. Inducted into India's Strategic Forces Command in 2003, the Prithvi missile, the first missile to be developed under India's prestigious IGMDP strengthens India's nuclear deterrence

56 CRORE AADHAAR NUMBERS ISSUED BY UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA (UIDAI)

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has completed issuance of 56 crore Aadhaar Numbers. With generation of about 13-14 lakhs Aadhaar Numbers every day, the flagship programme appears all set to complete its mandate of covering 60 crore population in the next few weeks.

Established as an Attached Office of the Planning Commission, through a Government Notification in January 2009, the UIDAI issued the first Aadhaar Number on 29th September 2010, after completing necessary preliminaries including establishing various standards relating to collection of data and biometric information such as finger prints and iris images. The UIDAI issued 25 crore Aadhaar Numbers in the period up to December 2012 at an average rate of almost one crore Aadhaars per month. During 2013, UIDAI issued a total of 29.1 crore Aadhaars at an average rate of over 2.4 crore Aadhaars per month.

With an increased capacity of Aadhaar generation, UIDAI is currently generating more than 3 crore Aadhaar Numbers per month and has a capacity to process 15-16 lakh enrolment packets every day leading to generation of 13-14 lakhs Aadhaar Numbers per day.

INDIA AND UAE AGREE TO PROMOTE COOPERATION IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

India and UAE have agreed to promote

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

cooperation in renewable energy, especially in the areas of solar energy and wind power. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, 18th of January. The MoU was signed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister of New and Renewable Energy of India and Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of State of UAE.

Both the countries also agreed to form a Joint Working Group for better coordination through joint research on subjects of mutual interest, exchange and training of scientific and technical personnel, exchange of available scientific and technologies information and data, organization of workshops, seminars and working groups, transfer of know-how, technology and equipment, on non-commercial basis etc.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah briefed the UAE Minister on the progress made by India in renewable energy with special reference to the National Solar Mission launched in 2010 under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. He also briefed the Minister on India's efforts in promoting energy for remote and un-electrified areas. He congratulated the UAE for warm hospitality extended during the 4th Assembly session of IRENA.

INDIA AND JAPAN ENTER INTO MEMORANDUM IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM

India and Japan have entered into a Memorandum for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism. The Memorandum was signed between Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the Japan Tourism Agency, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Government of Japan in New Delhi on 22nd January, 2014. Mr. Parvez Dewan, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism in his capacity as Director General, Tourism and Mr. Shigeto Kubo, Commissioner, Japan Tourism Agency signed the Memorandum.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Shigeto Kubo, Commissioner, Japan Tourism Agency expressed the hope that the Memorandum would facilitate travel and tourist visits and further strengthen the tourism partnership between the two countries.

Mr. Parvez Dewan, Secretary, Ministry of

Tourism, Government of India said that religious tourism in the form of Buddhist heritage sites is a great attraction for Japanese tourists to India. He said that Japanese tourists have been availing visa-on-arrival in a major way and the highest number of visas on arrival were issued to the tourists from Japan during 2013, as in previous years.

Japan is an important source market for Indian Tourism. During 2013, India received 2.20 lakh tourists from Japan.

This Memorandum between India and Japan is intended to serve as the key instrument for greater action oriented cooperation and further strengthening the close tourism partnership between the two countries. The main objectives of the Memorandum are :

- (a) To expand bilateral cooperation in the tourism sector;
- (b) To exchange information and data related to tourism ;
- (c) To encourage cooperation between Tour Operators and tourism stakeholders including Hotel owners;
- (d) To establish exchange programmes for cooperation in Human Resource Development;
- (e) To exchange visits of Tour Operators/Media/Opinion Makers for promotion of two way tourism;
- (f) To exchange experience in the areas of promotion, marketing, destination development and management;
- (g) To participate in travel fairs/exhibitions in each other's country; and
- (h) To promote safe, honourable and sustainable tourism.

INDIA'S AVIATION SAFETY RECORD ABOVE GLOBAL AVERAGE

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assessment of India on Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) is much above the global average. Under USOAP, ICAO has identified eight critical elements viz. legislation, organisation, licensing, operation, airworthiness, accident investigation, air navigation and aerodromes. As per

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

ICAO 2013 Safety Report based on USOAP audit results as on 31 December, 2012, India figures among the States having effective implementation above the global average, which is 61%. India's Effective Implementation stands at 79.1%.

A brief comparison of India's status as on 31st December, 2012 with the global safety is given below:-

Critical Elements	Global Average (as on 31 Dec'12)	Global Average (as on date)	India's Status (as on 31 Dec'12)
Legislation	70.0	66.9	85.7
Organisation	63.0	63.5	57.1
Licensing	71.0	71.5	89.6
Operation	66.0	66.0	87.7
Airworthiness	72.0	72.9	91.1
Accident			
Investigation	51.0	53.6	75.3
Air Navigation	53.0	54.7	55.8
Aerodromes	58.0	57.7	87.4

The only area in which India lacks marginally in effective implementation of critical element is 'organisation'. For this, India has already created 75 posts of Chief Flight Operations Inspector (CFOI), Deputy CFOIs, Senior CFOIs and FOIs. After the recruitment, it is expected that effective implementation in this element also would rise much above the global average. In fact, in legislation even USA (80.95) is below India (85.71).

RABI CROP SOWING CROSSES 642 LAKH HECTARE AREA

The total rabi sown area, as per reports received from States, during the week ending 31.1.2014 stood at 642.89 lakh hectare as compared to 608.65 lakh hectare at this time last year.

Total sown area under wheat, pulses and oilseeds exceeds the normal area for the entire season.

Details of the areas sown so far this year and last year are given below:-

Crop	Area sown in 2013-14	Area sown in 2012-13
Rabi Rice	21.13	15.15
Wheat	315.25	296.32
Total Pulses	156.73	149.09

Coarse Cereals	60.50	61.92
Oil Seeds	89.28	86.18
Total	642.89	608.65

INDIA AS TOP INVESTMENT DESTINATION

India has received total foreign investment of USD 306.88 billion since 2000 and 94% of this amount has been received during last 9 years. India's Foreign Direct Investment policy has been progressively liberalised to make the investment regime more investor friendly. In a recent review of the policy the government has amended the sectoral caps and/or entry routes in some sectors viz. petroleum & natural gas; commodity exchanges; power exchanges; stock exchanges, depositories and clearing corporations; asset reconstruction companies; credit information companies; tea sector including tea plantations; single brand product retail trading; test marketing; telecom services; courier services and defence. The review of FDI policy is done with a view to boost investor confidence thereby stimulating FDI inflows and contributing to accelerated economic growth.

The government approved liberalisation of FDI norms in a number of sectors, including 100 percent in telecom and higher caps in insurance and defence sectors. FDI in multi-brand retail has been allowed up to 51%. The minimum foreign investment requirement is US\$ 100 million, at least 50% which shall be invested in 'backend infrastructure' within three years of the induction of FDI. The FDI limit in Single Brand Retail has been enhanced to 100%. It was also decided to allow 49 percent FDI in single brand retail under the automatic route and beyond through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) route. While the FDI cap in defence sector remained unchanged at 26 percent, it was decided that higher limits of foreign investments in 'state-of-the-art' technology manufacturing would be considered by the Cabinet Committee on Security.

The result of the liberal foreign investment policies is that India has been consistently rated amongst the top three investment destinations globally by all international bodies including World Bank, UNCTAD. This is also mirrored in the foreign investment data. Between 1999- 2004, India received

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

56

VOL-16 GIST OF PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

US\$ 19.52 billion of foreign investment which increased to US\$ 114.55 billion between 2004-09, and increased further to US\$ 172.82 billion between 2009- September 2013.

FDI inflows have a positive impact by supplementing domestic capital, technology and skills of existing companies including in the aviation sector, as well as through establishment of new companies. It has indirect multiplier effect on other related sectors also, and thereby stimulates economic growth. FDI inflows also have a positive impact on the current account balance.

When it comes to the impact of FDI in retail trading towards the consumers, it is beyond doubt that they have gained a lot from organised retail on multiple counts. Studies in comparable situations have revealed that lower income consumers saved more. Farmers too have benefited significantly from the option of direct sales to organised retailers. The profit realisation for farmers selling directly to organised retailers is about 60 per cent higher than that received from selling in the mandi.

Small manufacturers will benefit from the safeguard pertaining to a minimum of 30% procurement from Indian small industries. This would provide the necessary scales for these entities to expand capacities in manufacturing, thereby creating more employment and also strengthening the manufacturing base of the country. They will also derive the benefits of technology upgradation, which will provide a fillip to productivity and local value-addition, thereby raising the profitability and earnings of the small manufacturer. The sourcing condition will also enable the small enterprises to get integrated with global retail chains, thereby enhancing their capacity to export products from India. Small retailers would continue to be able to source high quality produce, at significantly lower prices, from wholesale cash and carry points. The young population joining the workforce will benefit from the creation of employment opportunities, in the entire range of activities from the backend to the frontend retail business, as also from the skills imparted to them by the prospective investors.

Price stabilisation and inflation control could be achieved through direct buying from farmers,

improving supply chain inefficiencies to lower transit losses, improved storage capabilities to control supply/demand imbalances, better quality and safety standards through farmer development and increased processing of produce. FDI in retail may thus be an efficient means of addressing this issue as this would bring in large investments required for the back end infrastructure & value chain and requisite technical & management know-how.

INDIA & UK SIGNS MOU TO ENHANCE COLLABORATION

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE) to enhance the collaboration within the framework of UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI). The signing took place here in New Delhi today after a bilateral meeting held between the delegations led by between Minister of State (L&E), Government of India Shri K. Suresh, and Minister Mr. Matthew Hancock, Minister of State for Skills & Enterprise, United Kingdom.

The key points of the memorandum are as follows:

Focus of this MOU is to collaborate and build partnership in the area of Skills Development and Employment Services. The MoU will be the guiding document for overall collaboration under which the following activities will be supported:

1. Institutional capacity building of UK and Indian official and institutes handling skill development and employment services
2. Sharing of technical expertise, building linkages and identification of gaps in the areas of skill development and employment services, improvement in curriculum, benchmarking of assessment, certification and training methods.
3. Supporting development of employment services in India on the lines of National Careers Service, UK.
4. Other beneficial projects, in the area of skill development and employment services, mutually agreed.

As a first step, UKIERI will facilitate

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

partnership of Indian stakeholders with the existing Career Services in the UK. Best practices from the UK will be shared with MoLE and other stakeholders to help develop the Indian model. A workshop in this regard would be jointly organized by MoL&E and UKIERI in February 2014. This initiative will be jointly funded by MoLE and UKIERI. The India cost will be borne by MoLE and the UK cost will be borne by UKIERI.

India and the UK will partner on Mentor Councils in the identified priority sectors in responding to the skills demand in the sector and would cover an entire spectrum viz. restructuring of courses, curriculum development, identification and development of good teaching and learning aids, training of trainers with quality, devising assessment mechanisms, improving on the job training etc.

UKIERI will support in providing UK experts for the Mentor Councils for upto 10 sectors through institutional partnership between the MCs set up by MoLE and the National Skill Academies in the UK. Each partnership will be jointly funded by MoLE and UKIERI. The Indian cost of the partnership will be borne by MoLE and the UK cost of the partnership will be borne by UKIERI.

GLOBAL CRUDE OIL PRICE OF INDIAN BASKET DECLINES TO US\$ 104.77 PER BBL ON 10.1.2014

The international crude oil price of Indian Basket as computed/published today by Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas fell to US\$ 104.77 per barrel (bbl) on 10.01.2014. This was lower than the price of US\$ 105.11 per bbl on previous trading day of 09.01.2014.

In rupee terms also, the crude oil price of Indian Basket declined to Rs 6489.45 per bbl on 10.01.2014 as compared to Rs 6535.74 per bbl on 09.01.2014.

This was due to fall in price in dollar terms and also because of Rupee appreciation. Rupee closed

stronger at Rs 61.94 per US\$ on 10.01.2014 against Rs 62.18 per US\$ on 09.01.2014.

The table below gives details in this regard:

Particulars	Unit	Price on January 10, 2014 (Previous trading day i.e. 19.01.2014)	For pricing Fortnight 12 to 27.12-2013 Effective 1.1.2014
Crude Oil	(\$bbl)	104.77 (105.11)	108.46
Indian Basket	(Rs/bbl)	6486.45 (6535.74)	6726.69
Exchange Rate	(Rs/\$)	61.94 (62.18)	62.02

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways observed 25th National Road Safety Week from 11th-17th January this year. The "National Road Safety Week" is observed throughout the country, in the month of January every year, to highlight the need to make roads safe and to give all stakeholders an opportunity to take part in concerted efforts for the cause. To mark 25 years of road safety, the Ministry launched a new Logo on Road Safety, with an aim to encourage every section of society to join hands towards making roads safer.

The theme of this year's Road Safety awareness was "When on road, always say Pehle Aap", to educate all drivers in this etiquette of "Lukhnavi Tehzib" requiring them to be more generous and considerate towards fellow road users. This attitude of "Pehle Aap" will help prevent many avoidable road accidents and make road journeys less stressful.

During the last two years, the number of road accidents has shown a decreasing trend. Number of fatalities has also decreased in 2012. However there is no scope for being complacent. The road safety scenario in India needs urgent improvement with over 1.38 lakh lives lost in 4.9 lakh accidents in 2012.

Several measures towards improving road safety including improvements in roads from engineering perspective, road safety audits at all stages of road construction beginning right from the planning stage besides identification and remedy of black spots which account for almost 90% of road fatalities in India. The same has been taken up in thirteen states.

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

Getting Started with IAS Exam Preparations - FAQ for New Aspirants

Civil Services is the dream of many students. No wonder, there is a great competition for this examination, given the prestige and power linked to the profile of a civil servant. However, a large majority of students are struggling without any proper guidance. Thus, at [UPSCPortal](#) we have come up with an initiative to guide the aspirants, in their journey through the IAS, IPS exam.

We have started with a series called- Getting Started with Civil Services Examinations, to guide you in your preparations. Every other day, we would come up with motivational and informative articles, discussing the various aspects of the civil services examination, and the possible strategies, that a candidate might choose to get success.

The Vision

Our aim is to guide the candidate, in making different decisions while facing the UPSC. We welcome the aspirants to discuss, with us, their problems and confusions, anytime. Any aspirant may subscribe to the **Getting Started Series**, and enjoy our support free of cost. You may, later, take our other products and services, if you so like.

We wish the candidates All the Best for the their preparations!!

- [Civil Services Exam: What, Why and How ?](#)
- [How to Read A Newspaper for IAS Exam](#)
- [Two more attempts in UPSC Exams: all boon and no bane!!](#)
- [How to Study? The Ultimate Dilemma](#)
- [Preparing for Civil Services without Coaching](#)
- [IAS Preparation for Rural/Remote Areas Students](#)
- [Why do Online Test Series?](#)
- [NCERT and NIOS Books for IAS Preparations](#)
- [Strategy for IAS Exam for Working Professionals](#)

For More Important Articles Click below Link

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/getting-started>

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

Gist of

SCIENCE REPORTER

▷ SAFFRON THE GOLDEN SPICE

A strong and haunting aroma, a characteristic bittersweet taste, saffron bestows a golden hue to all the dishes it graces. A high value and low volume cash crop, and highly labour intensive, saffron is one of the world's most expensive price. It is used mainly as a source of secondary metabolites with have incredible aromatic, medicinal and therapeutic values.

The name saffron is derived from the Arabic word Zaffran, which means yellow. Saffron is called Kesar in Punjabi, Kum kum, Keshara and Arsika and Sanskrit, Zffran in Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, and Koug in Kashmiri. Cultivation of saffron dates back to 550 A.D.

The saffron crop was first cultivated in Greece. Today, it is cultivated from the eastern Mediterranean to India. The saffron growing areas are located at an altitude of 1600-2100 metres above the sea level. The largest producers of saffron include Iran, Spain and India, which together account for more than 95% of the world production. France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Morocco are the other producers of saffron. In India, about thousands of hectares of land are under cultivation in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. India produces about 10% of the world's supply of saffron.

Kashmir has the proud privilege of being one of the few places in the world where saffron is grown. Pampore, located about 13 kilometres from

Srinagar, is a place where this high-priced crop is grown on the elevated (karewa) topography. The karewa soils are brown to yellowish brown and slightly alkaline in nature. Kashmiri saffron is considered the best in the world due to its distinctive long silky threads with a dark red colour and thicker heads, pleasant aroma, powerful colouring and flavouring qualities.

Saffron consists of the dried stigmas and tops of the styles of the lower of the plant *Crocus sativus*, which belongs to the Iridaceae family. Pure saffron consist of only the orange-red stigmas of the saffron plant. Although the yellow stamens are also harvested, they do not have the same aromatic odour and colour properties compared to stigmas. Saffron stigmas should be red with orange tips. Threads that lack orange tips may be dyed, thence should be avoided.

Types and Grades of Commercial Saffron

There are three grades of saffron available in the Indian market: Saffron Lachha, Saffron Mongra and Saffron Zarda. There are three grades of saffron classified based on colour, floral waste content and foreign matter:

- Special (Moongra)
- Standard (Lacha), and
- Grade standard (Guchi)

The price of saffron is generally decided by the physical appearance of the product, colour and percentage of floral wastes and foreign matter.

Grade of Commercial Saffron as per ISI Standards

Commercial grade	ISI grade	Color	Floral wastage%	Foreign matter
Mongra	Special	Deep red	5.0 (50g/Kg)	0.5 (5g/Kg)
Lacha	Standard	Light reddish	10.0 (100g/Kg)	1.0 (10g/Kg)
Guchi	Grade standard	Bright red	-	-

UPSC PORTAL

www.upscportal.com

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

HIGHLY LABOUR INTENSIVE

- About one kilogramme of dried saffron is produced from 5-5.0 kilogrammes of fresh stigma and style. These stigmas are separated from nearly 45-50 kilogrammes of fresh flowers, which contain about 1.13-1.5 lakh flowers.
- One kilogramme of flowers is required to produce 12 grams of dried saffron of 72 grams of most threads of freshly harvested saffron flowers.
- One pound of lowers yields 0.2 oz of dried saffron.
- One freshly picked flower yields about 30 mg of fresh saffron or 7 mg dried saffron.

Cultivation and collection of Saffron

Saffron is mainly a rain-fed crop requiring cool and sunny climate and flourishes best at an altitude of 2140 metres in slightly alkaline soils. Saffron cultivation requires loose, friable, low density, well watered and well drained clay calcareous soils with high organic content.

The first flowering takes place in October or November of the following year. About 100-150 millimeters of rainfall is essential for the growth of the plant during pre-flowering stage. The number of saffron flowers and the time of blooming in any year is dependent upon the temperature prevalent in spring and autumn and upon the amount of rainfall.

Proper drying of saffron is essential to maintain appropriate concentration of its various constituents. Traditional sun drying may take longer time due to the low temperature prevailing during the autumn which results in quality deterioration as well as contamination by insects and pathogens. Therefore, solar hot air dryers have been devised with the help of which saffron drying has become possible in 4-6 hours without bringing any change in pigment concentration. Low cost saffron driers have also been developed for farmers.

Dry saffron is highly sensitive to fluctuating pH levels, and rapidly breaks down chemically in the presence of light and oxidizing agents. It must be, therefore, stored away from light and oxygen in air tight containers in a cool and dry place. Saffron is somewhat resistant to heat.

Chemical Constituents

Saffron contains more than 150 volatile and aroma producing compounds mainly terpenes, terpene alcohols and esters. It also contains many

non-volatile compounds most of which are carotenoids (tetra terpenes) including Zeaxanthin, Lycopene, and various alpha and beta carotenes.

The aqueous extract of saffron has been found to have hypotensive properties which appear to be due to the actions of two of its major constituents — Crocin and Safranal. Of these two Safranal is considered more potent than Crocin for lowering blood pressure. Saffron aqueous extract and Safranal also have hypolipaemic, anxiolytic, hypnotic and anti-depressant properties.

Use of Saffron

- Colouring and flavouring agent in foods like biryanis, Indian sweets such as kheer, rasmalai, lassi, and makhaniya lassi. Ingredient of kaesar pulao, kaesar kulfi and kaesar paeda.
- Antispasmodic, emmenagogue and stimulant.
- Has powerful antioxidant constituents and hence possesses anti-cancer, anti-arthritic, anti-hypertensive properties.
- Improves digestion and appetite, provides relief from gas and acidity problems.
- Treats cough, insomnia, skin-related problems like dry skin.
- Enhances and lightens and skin tone.
- Purifies blood and improves circulation especially to the organs of digestion.
- Possesses insecticidal and pesticidal properties (picro-crocin).
- Volatile or essential oil of saffron is used in the treatment of enlarged live and spleen, fevers, catarrh, melancholia and depression.
- Used in perfumes and dyes.

Subscribe "The Gist" Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

- Additive in culinary, bakery, for making saffron cakes and confectionery preparations.
- Act as a strengthening agent for the heart and a cooling agent for the brain.
- In Ayurveda, Unani, Chinese and Tibetan medicine, it is popularly known as stimulant, warm and dry in action, and helps in urinary, digestive and uterine troubles.
- In Ayurveda, it is used to treat cold and cough, acne and several skin diseases and certain chronic disease such as asthma and arthritis.

Spurious versus Genuine Saffron?

Saffron is the most expensive spice in the world, and its high price often leads to its adulteration. Different materials used as adulterants include floral parts of saffron other than stigma, which are mixed with genuine materials as such or after being dyed. Examples of these include corn silk, fibres of shredded meat dyed with saffron water, fibrous roots of various grasses, coloured nylon fiber, florets of marigold and slender roots of willow. Besides, fats, oils, and glycerine are also sometimes used to increase the weight.

Often, the corn threads are coloured or dyed with safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*) to make the fake saffron look similar to the real one. Fake saffron is slightly thicker and reasonably much cheaper than high quality pure saffron.

▷ VEGGIES THAT REPAIR RADIATION DAMAGE

For all those who screw up their face at the sight of broccoli and cauliflower, here's some news that might draw you to the veggies.

Radiation kills cancer cells. But any nearby healthy cells hit by the radiation also will die or suffer lasting harm. Unless, that is, the body quickly repairs them. Now, scientists of the Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. have identified a chemical that might help with these repairs. It's called DIM, and it develops in the body after eating a diet rich in broccoli and related vegetables, such as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and kale.

These vegetable contain a healthful

compound. In the stomach, that compound is converted into DIM (also known as 3',3'-diindolylmethane). It has now been shown that DIM helps cell recover from high doses of radiation, at least in rats. And only healthy cells benefit.

Earlier studies in animals had showed that DIM can kill cancer cells. In 2009, Fan and Eliot Rosen led a team at Georgetown that showed DIM's benefits don't stop with fighting cancer, DIM also protects cells from some types of chemical damage. Now they've extended their findings to DIM's protection of cells hit by radiation.

Scientists have known for decades that the body has ways to repair radiation damage. The new data suggest DIM gives that repair system a boost. And the new experiments indicate DIM works quickly. More importantly, DIM shows promise for people with cancer, instance, if a nuclear bomb went off a nuclear reactor broke down, DIM might help people naturally repair damage to any cells not killed outright by the radiation.

▷ EMERGING ALTERNATIVE TO SATELLITE-BASED GPS

A British company has come out with a new technology which it claims could soon replace the existing GPS system. The technology is called NAVSOP (Navigation via Signals of Opportunity).

The manufacturers claim that it will work even when GPS is unavailable. It uses the collection of radio frequency signals from TV, radio and cell phone masts, even Wi-Fi routers, to reduce a position. In any given area, these signals tend to be at constant frequencies and power level as they are heavily regulated.

The infrastructure required to make NAVSOP work is already in place and the 'software defined radio' microchips that run NAVSOP routines can easily be integrated into existing satellite navigation. The technology can also work inside urban concrete buildings where GPS signals cannot currently, and reach remote parts of the world such as the Arctic, by picking up signals that include Low-Earth-Orbit satellites and other civilian signals.

GPS rely on a specific and relatively weak satellite signal that is vulnerable to disruption.

Online Coaching for IAS Exam (at just Rs. 100 per month)

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses>

NAVSOP is able to calculate its position by making use of the hundreds of different signals that are all around us. By exploiting such a wide range of signals, NAVSOP is resistant to hostile interference such as jamming (a particular weakness of GPS) and spoofing, where a bogus signal tricks a device into misidentifying its location.

The new system can learn from signals that are initially unidentified to build an ever more accurate and reliable fix on its location. Even the signals from GPS jammers can be exploited by the device to aid

navigation under certain conditions. Another benefit is that it can be exploited by the device to aid navigation under tertiary conditions. Another benefit is that it can be integrated into existing positioning devices to provide superior performance to GPS.

Among different signal types, NAVSOP captures only those signals that repeat in a predictable fashion – repetitive structures in the radio bands, equivalent to the Pseudo Random Number (PNR) code from GPS satellite. In the outside environment, timing measurements are used for calculating position of an object.

**Subscribe “The Gist” Yearly Subscription Here
at Just Rs. 40 per Month**

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>

'THE GIST' MAGAZINE

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION



Gist of THE HINDU
Gist of Yojana Magazine
Gist of Science Reporter
Gist of Kurukshetra Magazine
Gist of PIB



THE HINDU

YOJANA

Kurukshetra

Press Information Bureau



for Help Call: 011-45151781, 65023618

UPSC PORTAL
www.upscportal.com

THE GIST DETAILS:

- Ø Medium: English
- Ø Price: Rs. 600 Rs. 449
- Ø No. of Booklets: 12 (1 Year)
- Ø Publisher: UPSCPORTAL.COM
- Ø File Type: PDF File Only (No Hard Copy)

TOPICS OF THE GIST

- Ø Gist of The Hindu
- Ø Gist of Yojana
- Ø Gist of Kurukshetra
- Ø Gist of Press Information Bureau
- Ø Gist of Science Reporter

For Full Information Click Here:

<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/the-gist-subscription>