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SIMPLY PUT

WHAT THE GI TAG CAN MEAN FOR THE CASHEW INDUSTRY IN GOA

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
PANAJI, OCTOBER 15

RECENTLY, GOAN cashew (kernel) got the geographical indication (GI) tag. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant hailed the recognition as a great opportunity for the cashew industry in the state and "a milestone towards Swayampurna Goa mission".

A GI tag is conferred upon products originating from a specific geographical region, signifying unique characteristics and qualities. Essentially, it serves as a trademark in the international market.

Challenges industry is facing

Cashew manufacturers and processors in Goa said they hoped the GI tag would help consumers differentiate between authentic Goan cashews and cashews sourced from outside the state, often marketed as 'Goan cashews'.

The application for the GI tag for the Goan cashew — derived from the Portuguese name *caju* or *kaju* in Konkani — was filed by the Goa Cashew Manufacturers' Association (GCMA), with the Department of Science, Technology and Waste Management, Government of Goa, acting as facilitator. Deepak Parab, nodal officer, patent facilitation centre at the State Council for Science and Technology, said, "Goan cashew will come with the GI logo. Traders won't be able to use Goan cashew logo on the packets without registration. The government will promote it."

Rohit Zantye, GCMA president, said Goan cashew nuts are an integral part of Goan identity and "over the years have become synonymous with Goa." Zantye said in the past few years, a chunk of the cashew market has been captured by small traders from other states, who sell cheaper imported cashews by labelling them as 'Goan cashew' for profiteering.

"There are about 300 shops in Calangute alone selling cashews from Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Tanzania, and from other Indian states, marketing them as Goan cashew. These traders and processors do not comply with the norms of quality, packaging, weighing, etc. and products are often of inferior quality. We had received complaints from tourists. All this affects 'brand Goa'," he said.

The influx of cheaper cashews has meant that several processing units and



Cashew apples being squashed in Chorao, Goa. *Wikimedia Commons*

manufacturers in Goa have been unable to sell all their produce within the state, and have had to find markets outside, curtail production, or shut factories. Higher minimum wages and compliance norms than in states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have also contributed to the decline in sales for traditional Goan cashew processors.

Zantye said the processing units have dwindled down from 40 in 2005 to over 15 at present.

A cashew processor in Goa, requesting anonymity, said, "Earlier, 80 per cent of our sale was in Goa. But now it is difficult to compete on the price front. These smaller traders do not have a permanent labour force. They can avoid fixed input costs of larger factories and labour welfare, and evade compliance. From the naked eye, the consumer cannot tell the difference between Goan cashew or imported cashew. The difference in colour is marginal. The Goan cashew is sweeter in taste."

Madhav Sakhari, GCMA member and president, Goa Cashew Producers Association, said unless there was strict action against illegal marketing practices, the GI tag would not have much of an impact.

How cashew came to Goa

Cashew was native to northeast Brazil and was introduced to Goa by the Portuguese in 1570, mainly as a crop for afforestation and soil conservation.

The story goes that the edible value of cashew nut was discovered by Goan prisoners exiled to the Portuguese territory of Africa (Mozambique) during Goa's freedom movement in the mid-18th century.

LONGER VERSION

indianexpress.com/explained

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-3 (Agriculture Trade)

In the news:

- Goan cashew (kernel) got the GI tag recently.
- This will help boost the cashew industry in Goa.
- Cashew was native to northeast Brazil.
- Introduced in Goa by the Portuguese in 1570. The intention behind was soil conservation and afforestation.
- It is so believed that cashew was discovered as edible by Goan prisoners exiled to the Portuguese territory of Africa (Mozambique) during Goa's freedom movement in the 18th century.

Citing deepfakes, Govt looks at IT rules to make WhatsApp disclose source ID

Traceability provision needs to be invoked to put brakes, says Minister

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

AS THE country heads to Lok Sabha elections in 2024, the Centre is looking to invoke a controversial law that would require WhatsApp to share details about the first originator of a message on account of rising artificial intelligence (AI)-led misinformation on the messaging platform, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The basis for this are multiple deepfake videos of politicians circulating on WhatsApp, and the government is understood to be in the process of sending an order to the messaging company under the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, seeking the identity of the people who first shared the videos on the platform.

A deepfake is a video of a person in which the face or body has been digitally altered so that he or she appears to be someone else, typically used to spread false information.

"It's not about partisanship. The videos in question depicted deepfakes of politicians from different political parties. Such fake videos of politicians from across the political aisle have been brought to our notice, which we

EXPLAINED
E The concern, the debate

THE IT law provision that the Government looks to invoke is at the centre of a debate given that WhatsApp has called it a threat to its end-to-end encryption system which keeps communications private from even the company itself. The platform says enforcement of such a measure will lead to mass surveillance. The government, on its part, says normal functioning of WhatsApp will not be impacted.

believe can cause harm to electoral integrity in India. So we are planning to send a first originator notice to WhatsApp," a senior government official said, requesting anonymity.

This would be the first time that the Central government will directly send an Internet platform an order under Section 4(2) of the IT Rules, 2021.

The move could be
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-3 (S&T)

In the news:

- As elections are around, the Union Government is considering seeking the identity of the people who first share videos on whatsapp.
- The government shall do so under Section 4(2) of the IT Rules of 2021.
- This is being considered on account of rising deepfakes or AI led misinformation on the messaging platform.

What are deepfakes:

- Deepfakes are videos of a person in which the face or body is altered digitally so as to appear as somebody else.
- These are typically used to spread false information.

For more information refer to daily analysis covered on January 14th.

Sri Lanka moves towards RCEP; Bangladesh in queue

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI/COLOMBO

Four years after India walked out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, neighbours Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are now considering their chances of membership in the 15-nation trading bloc.

Sri Lanka has already applied to join the RCEP. President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who begins a visit to China for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Forum on Sunday, is expected to seek support for his country's candidacy in meetings with leaders there.

The Bangladesh government – whose Commerce Ministry has recommended joining the RCEP – is expected to take a final decision only after the elections are held there in January 2024, Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen said.

The Sri Lankan Presidential Secretariat con-

firmed the government's application for the RCEP membership in an August statement, saying that it recognised “the potential of this vast trade bloc comprising major economies like China, Japan, and [South] Korea”.

As his government negotiates with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other creditors for loans to tide over the financial crisis, Mr. Wickremesinghe has moved more purposefully towards the RCEP membership. Through bilateral meetings, he is seeking support for the move from Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand, and is likely to raise the issue in his meetings in Beijing as well.

“There have been some processes and discussions [towards joining RCEP], but we haven't made an application yet. Our general principle is not to join any big organisation or agreement until after the election mandate,” Mr. Momen said in an interview to *The Hindu*. He explained that this was why Bangla-



Ranil Wickramasinghe

desh had not yet pursued the RCEP membership or that of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) earlier this year.

Both countries are also in talks with India for updated free trade agreements (FTAs), and are part of the 2006 South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). However, they recognise that joining the RCEP would take them out of the orbit of subcontinental trade, and enable access to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)-led group that comprises China, Japan, South Korea, Australia,

and New Zealand. At present, the RCEP members represent 30% of the global GDP; in fact, it is the first such agreement involving the big Asian economies. The final RCEP document said that the 15 countries would aim to eliminate up to 90% of tariffs imposed on goods traded within the bloc within 20 years.

Rethink the decision?

External Affairs Ministry officials did not respond to requests for a comment on whether India would reconsider its decision to pull out of the RCEP talks, as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh make plans to join. A senior government official dealing with international trade said that if India's neighbours joined the RCEP, it would be a “development of concern”, citing the opening up of markets in India's vicinity to a group dominated by Chinese trade, and the possibility that those markets may become “more globally competitive” than India's.

While India was a founder member of the RCEP grouping, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India would pull out of the talks in 2019, owing to concerns over mobility in services and fears of Chinese goods flooding the market, as well as objections raised by the domestic agriculture sector and small businesses. While India has been invited to return to the RCEP meetings on several occasions, the government has not yet indicated that it would consider a review.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have additional reasons for the move away from the more protectionist policies in both countries, analysts say.

“During the crisis in Sri Lanka, I think we learned that regional markets are the key. Sri Lanka has missed the boat on other regional groupings and FTAs in the past. I hope joining RCEP and other FTAs will help us spread our market, and frankly think it will force us to become more competitive with interna-

tional players,” explained Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson, CEO of Sri Lanka's Hemas Group, the island's biggest FMCG and healthcare company. She was speaking to a group of South Asian diplomats, economists and editors in Colombo, attending the “One South Asia” conference organised by the World Bank.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is expected to graduate from the list of Least Developed Countries by November 2026, and will lose preferential access to global markets, with a recent paper estimating that export earnings could drop by 14% and average tariffs could increase by 9%.

According to *The Business Standard*, a Bangladeshi newspaper, its Commerce Ministry's proposal said that joining the RCEP could increase Bangladesh's exports by \$5 billion. As Bangladesh is already negotiating free trade agreements with six of the 15 RCEP countries, joining the grouping would simplify the process, the proposal added.

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-2 (IR)

In the news:

- Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are considering joining RCEP.
- Sri Lanka has already applied to join the trading bloc while the Bangladesh Commerce Ministry has recommended joining the bloc.

About RCEP:

- RCEP is a group of 15 countries led by China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the 10-state ASEAN grouping, creating one of the world's largest trading blocs.
- The final RCEP document suggests that the 15 countries would aim to eliminate up to 90% of tariffs imposed on goods traded within the bloc within 20 years.
- At present RCEP represents 30% of the global GDP.
- India is not a member of the bloc (withdrew from discussions in 2019).

The UN approved Kenya-led security mission to Haiti

What is the purpose of the multi-national security mission? Why was there a delay in deployment?

Sumeda

The story so far:

Around a year after Haiti approached the United Nations seeking urgent help to combat deadly gang violence, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has approved international intervention in the form of a foreign security mission, led by Kenya, to restore security, protect critical infrastructure and control spiralling violence in the country. Haiti has experienced a surge in violence over the past year as armed groups took control of large parts of the country, including the capital Port-au-Prince. This has resulted in the killings of nearly 2,800 people, including 80 minors, between October 2022 and June 2023.

Why is UN sending a mission to Haiti?

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry first sought international support to assist the national police in October last year after the country plunged into a crisis when a

group of gangs called "G9 and Family" seized control of the entry of the main fuel port Varreux in the capital protesting the PM's decision to cut fuel subsidies. The blockade brought the country to a standstill and led to massive shortages. The lack of gas and diesel adversely affected transportation and forced several hospitals and other medical institutions that relied on fuel-powered generators to halt operations. A UNICEF report at the time claimed that the operations of three-quarters of the country's major hospitals were hit due to the blockade. To make matters worse, there was a shortage of bottled water in the backdrop of a new outbreak of cholera. As the crisis deepened and overwhelmed the short-staffed police force, Haitian leaders turned to the international community for help, seeking a specialised armed force to counter gangs and their sponsors.

However, the U.S. and the UN were hesitant to take the lead. The stalemate ended in July this year after Kenya proposed to head the multinational force,

following which the resolution was forwarded to the UNSC.

What do we know about the mission?

Unlike the UN peacekeeping mission to Haiti that ended in 2017, the multi-national security mission (MSS) will not be operated by the UN. Kenya has volunteered to lead the force. Other countries like the Bahamas, Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda have also offered support. The resolution says that the force will provide "operational support" to the Haitian National Police, including building its capacity to counter gangs, improve security conditions in the country and secure ports, airports and critical intersections. Notably, the resolution adds that the forces will have the authority to make arrests in coordination with Haitian police. It also intends to create favourable conditions in the country to pave the way for elections. Polls have not taken place in Haiti since 2016. The strength of the force in Haiti has not been specified in the resolution,

although discussions suggest that 2,000 personnel would be part of the mission.

While the U.S. has made it clear that it won't send its troops, it has pledged \$100 million in logistical support like intelligence, communications, airlift operations and medical aid. While the deployment date is yet to be announced, Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Mutua was quoted as saying by *The Associated Press* that the force could deploy within two to three months, or possibly early January.

What led to the delay?

Haiti's troubled past with foreign military interventions is being viewed as the primary reason for the delay in deployment. The last time a force was sent to stabilise Haiti was in 2004 when former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in a rebellion. This was followed by a UN peacekeeping mission which went on from 2004 to 2017. The mission was marred by allegations during its deployment in the country. A sewage runoff from a peacekeeper camp was blamed for causing a cholera epidemic which saw more than 10,000 deaths. There were also serious allegations of sexual abuse against the UN peacekeepers. Since then, Haitians have been sceptical about the intervention of a foreign armed force.

Moreover, countries were wary of lending support to PM Henry who doesn't enjoy the popular support of Haitians. *(With inputs from agencies)*

THE GIST

The United Nations Security Council has approved international intervention in the form of a foreign security mission, led by Kenya, to restore security, protect critical infrastructure and control spiralling violence in the country.

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Category:

- Prelims
- GS-2 (IR)

Context:

- Haiti sought international help to combat deadly gang violence a year before.
- The country was in a crisis after a group of gangs called "G9 and Family" seized control of the entry of the main fuel port Varreux.
- This blockade led to massive shortages of gas and diesel adversely affecting key services in the country.
- The group also took control of large parts of the country including its capital Port-au-Prince.

In the news:

- As per a UNSC resolution, a multi-national security mission will be sent to Haiti which will be headed by Kenya.
- Other countries like the Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda have also offered support.
- According to the resolution, the force will provide operational support to the Haitian National Police. The force will also be able to make arrests in coordination with Haitian police.

After 40 yrs, India-Sri Lanka ferry service restarted: Opportunities, challenges

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, OCTOBER 16

AN AGE-old sea route between India and Sri Lanka has been rejuvenated with the inauguration of a passenger ferry service from Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu to Kankesanthurai in Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka.

The initiative is aimed at bolstering bilateral ties, boosting tourism, and increasing people-to-people relations. It is expected to benefit local traders on both shores.

The new service

The ferry service was launched on Saturday. The name of the vessel, a High Speed Craft, is 'Cheriyapani'.

A one-way ticket costs around Rs 7,670, with a baggage allowance of up to 40 kg per passenger. The journey starts from Nagapattinam at 7 am, reaching Kankesanthurai by 11 am, and the return trip begins at 1.30 pm, arriving in Nagapattinam by 5.30 pm.

The previous route

Maritime linkage between India and Sri Lanka isn't new. The Indo-Ceylon Express or Boat Mail ran between Chennai and Colombo via the Thoothukudi port from the early 1900s up until 1982. However, the service was halted due to the civil war in Sri Lanka.

Before the civil war, one of the most popular routes was from Dhanushkodi to Talaimannar. Passengers would get onto the Boat Mail Express, a train from Chennai's Egmore railway station, and transfer to a coal-powered steam ferry in Dhanushkodi, which reached Talaimannar in roughly two hours.

Attempts to restart

The resumption of ferry services has been on the cards for quite some time, especially after the war ended in 2009. A Memorandum of Understanding concerning passenger transportation by sea was signed in 2011 and a similar service was



The ferry, Cheriyapani, will run between Nagapattinam and Kankesanthurai. PTI



launched. However, it did not last for more than six months due to poor response.

Attempts were also made to establish services from Rameswaram to Talaimannar and Karaikal to Kankesanthurai. Various challenges kept these proposals from materialising.

Potential impact

By providing a transportation option, the ferry can amplify religious tourism in the coastal regions of both countries. From India, travellers can access significant religious sites in Colombo and the southern parts of Sri Lanka. Indian pilgrim centres

such as Nagapattinam, Nagore-Velankanni, Thirunallar, and temple towns such as Thanjavur, Madurai, and Tiruchi are expected to see an influx of Lankan tourists.

Beyond religious tourism, the services would boost regional commerce and trade.

Infrastructure and planning

Anticipating the influx of travellers, Tamil Nadu is ramping up infrastructural developments. E. V. Veitu, Minister for Public Works, said the state is in touch with multiple central departments, such as Customs, External Affairs, Shipping, and Immigration, to ensure a smooth experience for passengers.

The Nagapattinam port, under the Tamil Nadu Maritime Board, was upgraded recently with funds worth Rs 8 crore from the Union Ministry of External Affairs.

Launching the service on October 14, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said connec-

tivity is not only about bringing two cities closer but "also brings our countries closer, our people closer and our hearts closer."

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, in his video message, called the revival of the ferry service an important step towards strengthening connectivity between India and Sri Lanka.

EXPLAINED
INFRA

Initial challenges

Crucial to the success of the new venture will be how it is operated. Already, even as the inauguration of the ferry was being celebrated, the Shipping Corporation of India's (SCI) initial plan to run services every day for 10 days has been rescheduled to operate thrice a week.

While the onset of the northeast monsoon is one of the reasons being cited, sources at Nagapattinam port said the ticket fare, at approximately Rs 7,670, and poor ticketing systems are also a challenge.

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-2 (IR)
- GS-3 (Trade Infrastructure)

Potential impact of the ferry services:

- Amplify religious tourism in the coastal regions.
- The services will also boost regional commerce and trade.

In the news:

- Age old sea route between India and Sri Lanka rejuvenated with a ferry service from Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu to Kankesanthurai in Northern Sri Lanka.
- The name of the vessel is Cheriyapani.
- The initiative aims to bolster bilateral ties, boost tourism, increase people-to-people contact, and benefit local traders.

Suggested reads:

- GS3: "What the latest jobs data say" in the IE
- GS3: "The Indian Himalayan Region needs its own EIA" in TH
- GS3: "Confronting the long-term risks of AI" in TH
- GS2: "Palliative care, a way to reduce financial distress..." in THA

Important for prelims:

- Angel tax



World Co-operative Economic Forum formed



To give voice to over 3 mn cooperatives across globe

NEW DELHI, Oct 12: Leading cooperative sector experts have come together to form the World Co-operative Economic Forum (WCopEF) to give voice to over three million cooperatives spread across the globe, employing 10 per cent of the total workforce worldwide.

The WCopEF will endeavour to promote cooperative thinking and cooperative movement, in addition to raising issues and concerns of the sector with the governments and other stakeholders around the globe.

“WCopEF journey is starting at the juncture of ideation of an equitable economy, tempered by pragmatism. We are transitioning to a new engagement with the international cooperative economic order,” Dileep Bhai Shanghai, one of the founder members of the Forum, said in a statement.

Shanghai, Chairman of the fertilizer major IFFCO and President of National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI), had also earlier served as a member of parliament and a Minister in the Government of Gujarat.

The other founder members of the WCEF are Binod Anand, member MSP Committee on Agriculture Reforms, Dr Rakesh Arrawatia, Professor Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) and Ashish Anand, founder of Whrri (whr.loans).

“WCopEF will bring together, for the first time, co-operators, social scientists, cooperative economists and policymakers and myriad other stakeholders to brainstorm about the Social and Solidarity economy,” said Binod Anand.

The Forum, he added, “will generate actionable insights with a view to help stakeholders not just navigate but also shape the future

of cooperative economy.”

There are around 300 largest cooperatives in the world, generating over USD 2.1 trillion in revenue and providing many essential goods and services.

The WCopEF will aim to make cooperative policy thinking more collaborative towards building strong and prosperous communities in a fair and equitable world.

Among other things, the WCopEF will also transmit Indian cooperative learnings to shape global debates and policies. It will provide non-partisan, independent, well-researched analyses and inputs to sensitise decision-makers in governments, cooperative sector stakeholders, academia and civil society around the world.

The overarching objective will always be to promote cooperative movement across the globe for the benefit of all stakeholders, the statement added. – PTI

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Category:

- Prelims
- GS-2
- GS-3

Indo-Bangla military drill concludes



STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Oct 16: The eleventh edition of bilateral military exercise 'Sampriti' between India and Bangladesh which commenced at the Joint Training Node at Umroi in Meghalaya on October 3 concluded today.

The exercise aimed to achieve interoperability and to acquaint each other with the employment of a joint task force in sub-conventional operations under Chapter VII of the UN Mandate (UNPKO). Both the armies were able to achieve the earmarked aim, a defence spokesman said.

The Bangladesh contingent comprised a

group of 170 soldiers from the 52 Infantry Brigade and the Indian contingent comprised 170 soldiers from the 15th Battalion of the Rajput Regiment from 66 Mountain Brigade. The 340 soldiers from both Bangladesh and Indian Armies shared their experience gained from the conduct of various operations across the globe in the past.

The exercise was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, a Command Post Exercise was conducted and in the second phase Validation Exercise and Field Training Exercise including Battle Inoculation were conducted.

» **SEE PAGE 2**

- them. **SAMPRI**TI, initiated in 2009, aims to boost interoperability, share tactical expertise, and promote best practices between the Indian and Bangladeshi armies.
- The exercise focuses on enhancing cooperation and interoperability while conducting **Sub-Conventional Operations** as per Chapter VII of the UN mandate.
- It consists of a Command Post Exercise (CPX), a Field Training Exercise (FTX), and a Validation Exercise

India and Bangladesh had kicked off the **11th edition of their annual joint military exercise, SAMPRI**TI, from October 3, 2023, in **Umroi, Meghalaya**.

Category:

- Prelims
- GS-2



India has high debt like China, but risks are moderated, says IMF

WASHINGTON, Oct 11: India has a high debt like that of China but the risks associated with it are not as great as that of its northern neighbour, a senior official from the International Monetary Fund has said, advising India in the medium term to have an ambitious fiscal consolidation plan that brings down deficits.

"The current debt in India is also high. It stands at 81.9 per cent of GDP. Compared to China, which is 83 per cent, it is very similar. Also, when we compare India's

debt to the pre-pandemic level in 2019, it was 75 per cent. So it is still quite a bit higher," Ruud de Mooij, Deputy Director, Fiscal Affairs Department at International Monetary Fund, told PTL.

"What we also see in India is a deficit that is 8.8 per cent projected for 2023. In India, a large portion of this is because of expenditures on interest. They pay a lot of interest on their debt: 5.4 per cent of GDP is spent on that, and the primary deficit is 3.4 per cent. So together they add up to

8.8 per cent," he said.

Responding to a question, Mooij said that India's debt is not projected to rise like in China. It, in fact, is projected to fall slightly by 1.5 per cent to 80.4 per cent in 2028.

One of the reasons is that growth in India is much higher. India is one of the countries with really high growth. This matters of course for the debt to GDP ratio. Also, just to note that the risks are moderated by some factors, he said.

"One factor is, for instance, the long maturities of the debt.

They don't need to be renewed very frequently. This matters for the gross financing needs. And also, in India we see a large domestic domestically held debts and also denoted in domestic currency. So these mute the risks associated with the debts," he said.

The risk factor in India is the State level risks, he observed. "Some States really have high debts, have high financing needs and face a high interest burden. This is a factor that does mean that there are significant risks also for India," he said.

"What should India do? Well, the policy advice is for the medium term to have an ambitious fiscal consolidation plan that brings down the deficits, especially the primary deficits through a range of measures. It could be on the revenue side, could be on the spending side, and it could also be on fiscal management sort of using good fiscal rules, fiscal frameworks to manage the fiscal equation going forward. That is the overall advice that we would recommend," Mooij said. – PTI

India has a high debt like that of China but the risks associated with it are not as great as that of its northern neighbour,

The current debt in India stands at 81.9% of GDP. Compared to China, which is 83%,

Moderate Risk

One factor is, for instance, the long maturities of the debt. They don't need to be renewed very frequently. This matters for the gross financing needs. And also, in India we see a large domestic domestically held debts and also denoted in domestic currency. So these mute the risks associated with the debts.

Also, growth in India is much higher. India is one of the countries with really high growth. This matters of course for the debt to GDP ratio

CENTRE'S DEBT TO GDP RATIO COMPARED TO OTHER MAJOR ECONOMIES

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Japan	195.73	199.79	221.43	221.32
United States	90.99	93.11	119.37	115.28
United Kingdom	84.41	83.89	102.63	102.97
France	80.44	80.87	92.98	91.76
Brazil	80.36	82.68	92.67	87.75
India	48.17	47.95	49.23	61.39
Canada	36.16	35.72	59.45	55.55
Germany	39.31	37.42	44.43	46.27
South Korea	34.34	36.32	42.21	45.33
Vietnam	39.66	38.05	39.40	39.09
Bangladesh	29.60	31.66	34.18	35.55
Russian Federation	12.92	13.16	18.54	-

Note: Data for Russia's central government debt is only available till FY20

Source: IMF, India budget documents



Category:

➤ **GS-3**

HC rejects Purkayastha's plea challenging arrest in UAPA case



NEW DELHI, Oct 13: The Delhi High Court today refused to interfere with the arrest and subsequent police remand of NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and the news portal's human resources department head Amit Chakravarty in a case lodged against them under anti-terror law UAPA.

The High Court rejected their contention that they ought to have been supplied with the grounds of arrest when they were apprehended by police and said the UAPA does not mandate furnishing the written grounds and only speaks of the accused being "informed" about the reasons for arrest. The court said it would be "advisable" that the police henceforth provide the grounds of arrest in writing to an accused after redacting "sensitive material".

Dismissing the petitions, Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said there was no "procedural infirmity" or violation of legal or constitutional provisions in relation to the arrest and the remand order is sustainable in law.

"The petition, being devoid of any merit, along with pending applications, is dismissed," said the court in its order passed on the petition by the portal's founder.

"After examining the entire issue in the right perspective, it appears as of now that the grounds of arrest were indeed conveyed to the petitioner, as soon as may be, after the arrest

and as such, there does not appear to be any procedural infirmity or violation of the provisions of the Section 43B of the UAPA or the Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India and as such, the arrests are in accordance with law," the court stated.

The court noted that offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) directly impact the stability, integrity and sovereignty of the country and are of utmost importance since they affect national security.

It said the arrestee only needed to be informed about the grounds of arrest within 24 hours of being apprehended.

"Keeping in view the law laid down by the Supreme Court in (the case of) Pankaj Bansal (supra), and also considering the stringent provisions of UAPA, it would be advisable that the respondent, henceforth, provide grounds of arrest in writing, though after redacting what in the opinion of the respondent would constitute 'sensitive material'. This too would obviate, as held by the Supreme Court, any such challenge to the arrest as made in the present case," the court added.

The petitioners, besides assailing their arrest over non-supply of the reasons for it, had also contended that the subsequent remand order sending them to 7-day police custody was passed in the absence of their lawyers. – PTI

FIR has been registered against NewsClick under various Sections of the UAPA. Among the key provisions invoked is **Section 16**, which prescribes punishment for terrorist acts.

Section 15 of the UAPA defines **terrorist act** and is punishable with imprisonment for a term of at least five years to life. In case the terrorist act results in death, the punishment is death or imprisonment for life. This is an offence that describes violent acts that are serious in nature.

The other provisions invoked against NewsClick include Section 13 (unlawful activities), 16 (terrorist act), 17 (raising funds for terrorist acts), 18 (conspiracy), and 22 (C) (offences by companies, trusts) of the UAPA, along with IPC sections 153 A (promoting enmity between different group) and 120B (criminal conspiracy).

- Introduced in 1967, UAPA purpose was to target separatist organizations.
- It is an anti-terror law which aimed at preventing certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations.
- Investigation are done by the State police and the National Investigation Agency (NIA).
- The investigating agency has up to 180 days to file a charge sheet so getting bail is very tough.

Background of **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act**

- INTRODUCED IN LOK SABHA 8 JULY 2019
- PASSED IN LOK SABHA JULY 24, 2019
- PASSED IN RAJYA SABHA AUGUST 2, 2019

KEY POINTS

- The union government may title an organization as a terrorist organization if it
 - 1 Commits or participates in acts of terrorism,
 - 2 prepares for terrorism,
 - 3 promotes terrorism, or
 - 4 is otherwise involved in terrorism.

Category:
➤ **GS-3**

Bangla vessels dominating Indo-Bangla Protocol route

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

GUWAHATI, Oct 13: The number of Indian vessels plying on the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) waterways route has been much less compared to Bangladeshi ships, which is not in line with the agreement signed by the two neighbouring countries.

The protocol routes provide crucial waterways connectivity from Kolkata to Northeast India, via the Brahmaputra.

Sources said that Indian firms are being forced to outsource the carriage on the



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route to Bangladeshi agencies due to “paperwork hassles” in the neighbouring country, which has been causing “undue delays” and “harassment” for Indian shippers who have been shying away from operating in the route.

In the protocol agreement, the two governments had agreed to “sharing of the carriage of inter-country trade and transit cargo on an equal tonnage basis (50:50) by the

vessels of signatory countries to and from ports of call and customs stations including extended places of loading and unloading under customs formalities and supervision”.

In 2018-19, around 600 Bangladeshi ships used the IBP route compared to 40 Indian vessels. In the subsequent years also, the number of Indian vessels has been much less than Bangladeshi vessels, according to a Parliamentary committee report. Indian traders and companies were also outsourcing the carriage to Bangladeshi shippers.

» SEE PAGE 2

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Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade

The protocol on Transit and Trade through inland waterways between India and Bangladesh allows the use of waterways for commerce within the two countries and for the passage of goods from one country to another. This Protocol was first established in 1972 and was last renewed in 2015 for a period of five years with an option for automatic renewal for a further five years.

The existing protocol routes include Kolkata-Pandu-Kolkata, Kolkata-Karimganj – Kolkata, Rajshahi-Dhulian-Rajshahi and Pandu-Karimganj-Pandu. For inter-country trade, certain ports of call have been designated in each country. These Ports of call serve as intermediate stops for a ship on its scheduled journey for cargo loading and unloading, supplies or fuel intake, and maintenance and refurbishing.

The protocol allows for a 50:50 cargo sharing arrangement by Indian and Bangladeshi vessels for both transit and inter-country trade. New ports of call such as Jogigopha in India and Bahadurabad in Bangladesh have been added. These new ports provide connectivity to Meghalaya, Assam and Bhutan.

Category:

➤ GS-2

'Assam Pygmy Hog conservation a success story'

Face to Face

Prasanta J Baruah

Dr Parag Jyoti Deka is the Project Director of Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP). He joined PHCP in 1997 and was initially engaged in veterinary support, management and breeding of captive Pygmy hogs and later contributed in reintroduction and habitat restoration. Since 2018 he has been leading the programme.

What is the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP)?

The Pygmy Hog is the world's smallest and rarest wild pig most threatened by extinction. It belongs to a unique genus that has no close relative. The species was originally found in the narrow belt of tall alluvial grasslands that runs across the Southern edge of the Himalayas in the Indian subcontinent. However, by 1993 it was reduced to a single population found only in a few pockets of the Manas National Park.

The Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP) started in 1995 trying to save the rare Pygmy Hog species and its habitat. It is a collaborative project of Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, IUCN/SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group, Forest Department – Govt of Assam and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change – Govt of India and Eco-Systems-India and Aaranyak as delivery partners. This is a unique collaborative effort in India where public and private partnership work together to save a species from extinction.

One of the main activities of PHCP is conservation breeding of pygmy hogs. In 1996, six wild hogs were captured from Manas and brought to the Research and Breeding Centre located at Basistha, Guwa-

hati. PHCP maintains a captive population of about 80 hogs and has reintroduced 170 hogs over 15 years in Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, Orang National Park and Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Manas National Park in Assam.

How do you ensure their survival?

Before release in the wild, these hogs are taught to survive independently at a pre-release facility at Potalassi, Nameri Tiger Reserve. The released hogs are monitored using field signs (nests, forage marks, footprints and droppings), camera traps and radio-telemetry. Camera trap study at Orang National Park and sign survey have revealed that the reintroduced population has started breeding and expanding the population. Surveys are being carried out to identify and restore other protected grasslands for reintroduction. PHCP also conducts grassland research to find out how best to manage these habitats and conduct awareness generation and capacity building programmes among local communities and frontline protection staff for proper conservation of these threatened grasslands.

What are the main threats to their survival?

The main threats to survival of pygmy hog are loss and degradation of habitat due to human settlements, agricultural encroachments, flood con-



trol schemes, unsustainable livestock grazing, extensive grass burning and improper management. Some management practices, such as planting of trees in the grasslands and indiscriminate use of fire to create extensive damage to the habitats.

What is it called in Assam?

Pygmy Hog is known as *Nil Gahori* or *Takuri Borah* in Assamese. Bodos call it *Oma Thakri*.

How small is the Pygmy Hog?

It is only 60 to 65 cm in length and 25 cm in height. An adult male weighs 8 to 9 kg. Females are a bit smaller. Compared to a Wild Boar it is about 10-15 times less bulkier.

How can one tell a Pygmy Hog from a young Wild Boar or a domestic pig?

By its tail. In adult Pygmy Hogs the tail is only 2 to 3 cm (about an inch) long while even a young Wild Boar or domestic pig's tail is over 8 cm (3 inches) long. Also a Pygmy Hog female has only three pairs of teats while the other pigs have 5 to 6 pairs. Pygmy Hog also look different as their body is more streamlined.

Pygmy Hogs have 4 or 5 babies each year. They breed only once a year and the babies are born between April and June after a gestation period of about 155 days. The babies weigh only 150 gm at

birth, about the size of a rat. Pygmy Hogs eat rats, tubers, wild-fruits, termites, earthworms, eggs etc. found in the grasslands. In the wild a pygmy hog may survive for about 8 years but in captivity some individuals have lived for more than 10 years.

Where are the Pygmy Hogs found?

Presently, the Pygmy Hogs are found only in the grassland of Manas National Park and Orang National Park of Assam. In the past they were found in a narrow belt of grassland south of the Himalayan foothills in Uttar Pradesh, Nepal, Bihar, North Bengal and Assam. Even till 1990, they were present in a few places outside Manas, such as Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary, but the population other than those in Manas have all disappeared now.

How many Pygmy Hogs are left in the wild?

Although accurate numbers are not known it is estimated that there may be only a few hundred, probably less than 300 Pygmy Hogs are left in the wild.

Can one see them in Manas?

No, Pygmy Hogs are extremely shy animals and it is almost impossible to see them in the wild. You would be very lucky to spot one crossing a jungle track.

Why has habitat loss affected Pygmy Hogs more?

As Pygmy Hogs are very sensitive animals the habitat loss has affected them more than some other animals. They are unable to survive in a bad habitat. Pygmy Hogs also act as a 'barometer' for their ecosystem and help to forecast the health of the habitat. Thus they act as the 'indicator species'. Since many native animals and plants would not be able to

survive in a degraded habitat, it is important to save indicator species. Moreover, these wet grasslands also help in maintaining long term ecological and economic well being of the region as they serve as buffer against floods in rainy season while maintaining high groundwater levels in dry season, indirectly benefiting farming communities living in the fringe areas.

How did you start the conservation breeding programme?

The highly successful captive breeding project of PHCP began using six (2M, 4F) wild hogs captured from the last surviving population of the species in Manas in 1996. Later, a young male rescued in 2001, and another male and two females captured in 2013 from the same range joined the captive breeding stock. PCHP today holds almost the entire global captive population and maintains about 70 captive hogs at its two centres in Assam and breed more hogs for release.

How have you gone about reintroducing the Pygmy Hog in the wild again?

Reintroduction of captive hogs in the wild began in 2008. Initially, three protected areas keeping in mind their past distribution range in Assam were selected for better protection and restoration of alluvial grasslands. Over the next decade, 35 hogs (18M, 17F) were released in Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, 59 (26M, 33F) in Orang National Park, and 22 (11M, 11F) in Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary.

The reintroduction in Orang has been particularly successful as they have multiplied almost two and a half times in number (130-150), and have spread to areas far from release locations. It has

been estimated that with the release of these 54 hogs (20M, 34F) in Rupahi grasslands in the Bhuayanpara range of Manas National Park, the total number of reintroduced hogs and their progeny may have reached 180. About 60 hogs will be released over the 5-year-period in the Bhuayanpara range of Manas from where they had disappeared.

What is your roadmap ahead?

Till 2018, the PHCP was guided by the IUCN Species Action Plan (SAP), 1993, prepared by the Wild Pig Specialist Group. The revised SAP has been enacted with a long term vision till 2030. The PHCP is guided by Durrell's 'Rewild Our World' strategy and two associated plans which map out the programme until 2025, one for field and community activities in Manas and the second for the pygmy hog captive breeding and reintroduction programme.

Manas contains some of the largest remaining grassland blocks in the sub-Himalayan grassland ecosystems. The tall alluvial wet grassland belt just south of the Himalayan foothills also happens to be home of number of other highly threatened species, such as the Bengal florican, hispid hare, eastern barasingha and the water buffalo. The grassland is also used extensively by rhinoceros, elephant, tiger, hog deer and a number of small endangered animals. The Manas Plan renewed the focus of PHCP on the recovery of grasslands and these grasslands obligated species. At the same time the Pygmy Hog Plan envisions to establish pygmy hog populations in the entire sub-Himalayan grassland to ensure their long term survival.

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Category:
➤ GS-5

Pygmy Hog:

- It is the **smallest and rarest species** of wild pig in the world.
- It is one of the very few mammals that **build its own home**, or nest, complete with a 'roof'.
- It is an **indicator species** as its presence reflects the health of its primary habitat, tall and wet grasslands.

Once thought to be extinct, it was rediscovered in 1971.

The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, United Kingdom, initiated the **Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme in 1995**.

Pygmy hogs were brought into captivity in 1996 to start the recovery programme. **Between 2008 and 2022, 152 individuals have been reintroduced into four protected areas (PAs) in Assam, including the recent release of 36 individuals in Manas National Park.**

Rain-induced dust pollution worsening city scenario

STAFF REPORT



GUWAHATI, Oct 14: Dust pollution in most of the roads after every moderate to heavy rainfall has turned into a normal situation in Guwahati in recent times.

The main causes behind the worsening dust pollution are the lack of proper machinery and manpower, along with proper strategies on the part of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) to combat the civic-cum-public health issue.

Rampant earth cutting in the hills of the city, which are under way under the nose of the district administration, is the main source of dust particles. During every moderate to heavy rainfall, most of the drainage in Guwahati gets filled with the silt coming down from the hilly areas. With the overflowing of the drainage, the mud comes onto the roads, which later turn into dust particles, causing severe air pollution leading to public health hazard.

What has further worsened the pollution is the spurt in ill-conceived and ill-executed construction activities across the city.

The construction works are being carried out over a very long period of time by the authorities such as the PWD and

the GMC which do not adhere to even the basic norms of transportation and storage of construction materials such as sand, earth, stone chips, etc., besides those mandated during construction like adequately covering the construction site and spraying of water on the nearby roads.

Another irritant adding to the severity of dust pollution has been the nonsensical practice of the GMC to heap by the roadside the slush and earth collected from the roads and drainage.

Another disturbing part is that the veil of dust over the city atmosphere has almost become a permanent feature.

According to sources, at present the GMC is equipped with two sweeping machines, which are used in removing the dust from the roads. Each of machines costs around Rs 1.90 crore and GMC purchased the same under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). Now, the civic body is preparing to purchase two more such machines under the same programme.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the NCAP in January 2019 as a long-term, time-bound, national-level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country

in a comprehensive manner.

A senior official of the GMC informed that the use of sweeping machines to combat dust pollution is a mandate of the NCAP. But two or four such machines are not enough to cover the entire city within a short period of time after every rain.

"We need more than ten such machines to give the citizens respite from dust pollution after every heavy rain spell. We are also using water spraying machines in some areas to control the dust. But our strength is not enough as per requirement," the GMC official told *The Assam Tribune*.

Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, GMC Mayor Mrigen Sarania informed that the civic body is following a three-phase process to combat dust pollution in Guwahati.

"We are working in three phases as per requirement to control the dust pollution. First we clear the silt coming out from the drainage. In second phase, we sweep roads and spray water wherever possible. In major roads we are using machines and in narrow roads we are using manual method. But Guwahati produces dust and garbage in large scale every day. We are trying our best to address both the issues," Sarania said.

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Category:

➤ GS-3

➤ GS-5



SC refers electoral bonds case to 5-judge Constitution Bench

Top court cites 'importance of issue' for the decision; says it received plea seeking the shift; the case, as scheduled earlier, will be listed on Oct. 31

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

In a quick turn of events, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Monday referred the challenge to the validity of the electoral bonds scheme, which facilitates anonymous donations to political parties, to a Constitution Bench of five judges.

During the oral mentioning hour, the Chief Justice said the court had received a plea to refer the case from the three-judge Bench to a larger Bench.

He said the case would now go before a five-judge Bench owing to the "importance of the issue". The case, as scheduled in an

Contentious scheme

The anonymity that electoral bonds allow in political donations has caused concern ever since its introduction in 2018

- CPI(M), Association for Democratic Reforms and Common Cause move the Supreme Court claiming the scheme legalises anonymous and unlimited political donations

- The Finance Act, 2017 exempts electoral bonds from disclosure under the Representation of the People Act, 1951

- Petitioners say 95% of the electoral bonds sold have been in favour of one political party



earlier hearing on October 10, will be listed on October 31.

By refusing to delay the hearing for the formation of a five-judge Bench, the court has sent a clear message to the government that it does not intend to delay the hearing any

more. The case has been pending in the Supreme Court for over eight years now. "We are here to decide the case," Chief Justice Chandrachud observed in the October 10 hearing.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

- An electoral bond is like a Promissory Note, similar to a bank note, that is payable to the bearer on demand and free of interest. It can be purchased by any Indian citizen or a body corporate in India.
- An electoral bond may be issued in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 Lakh and Rs 1 Crore and are available at specified branches of the State Bank of India.
- A donor can purchase an electoral bond with a KYC-compliant account and can donate the bonds to their party of choice, which can then be cashed through the party's verified account within 15 days.
- Any political party that is registered under Section 29 A of the Representation of People Act, 1951, and has secured not less than 1 per cent of the votes polled in the last elections to the Lok Sabha or legislative assembly will be eligible to receive electoral bonds.

Issues with electoral bonds

- It has eliminated the cap on corporate donations. Thus it may unduly favour ruling parties.
- Any individual, firm or special interest group could now give an unlimited sum of money to any political party without disclosing a single rupee and no voter, no citizen, no journalist, and no civil society representative—would be able to connect the dots.
- ECI argued its objections to the Government on multiple grounds: concerns about foreign influence, the further consolidation of a corrupt business-politics nexus, and legal loopholes that could allow for dodgy money to be routed through shell companies.
- Thus it has been challenged in supreme court.

Category:

➤ **GS-2**

Consider the following statements

- 1) Dadabhai Nauroji was the first person to calculate per capita income in India
- 2) Gopal Krishna Gokhale became the first person to demand education as a fundamental right more than 100 years ago.
- 3) There was no mid-day meal Scheme during the British period.

Which of the statements given below are correct:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer: A

1. The first attempt to calculate the national income of India was made by Dadabhai Nauroji in 1867 - 68, who estimated per capita income to be ₹ 20.
2. In 1910, Gopal Krishna Gokhale demanded the Right to Education for Indian children from the Imperial Legislative Assembly.
3. The Mid Day Meal scheme was first introduced in Madras by the British administration in 1925 which was followed in Puducherry by the French administration in 1930. In the post-independence period, today the scheme is being implemented in most states

The special edition of paperback version of *Roget's Thesaurus* has 656 printed pages, and all are numbered except the covers. What would be the total number of digits used for page numbering this book ?

APSC CCE 2022 (Prelims)

- A. 1760 B. 1680 C. 1860 D. 1670

Correct Answer: C. 1860

Total number of digits used from page 1 to 9 = 9

Total number of digits used from page 10 to 99 (two-digit numbers)
 $= 90 \times 2 = 180$

Total number of digits used from page 100 to 656 (three-digit numbers)
 $= (656 - 99) \times 3 = 557 \times 3 = 1671$

Hence, the total number of digits used till 656 pages
 $= 9 + 180 + 1671 = 1860$