

15/oct/2018

Onasands

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

→ #MeToo campaign

→ Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 must be implemented in earnest (originated from Visakha guidelines)

Speaking out for "harmless" harassment is not trivialising; terming harassment as harmless is.

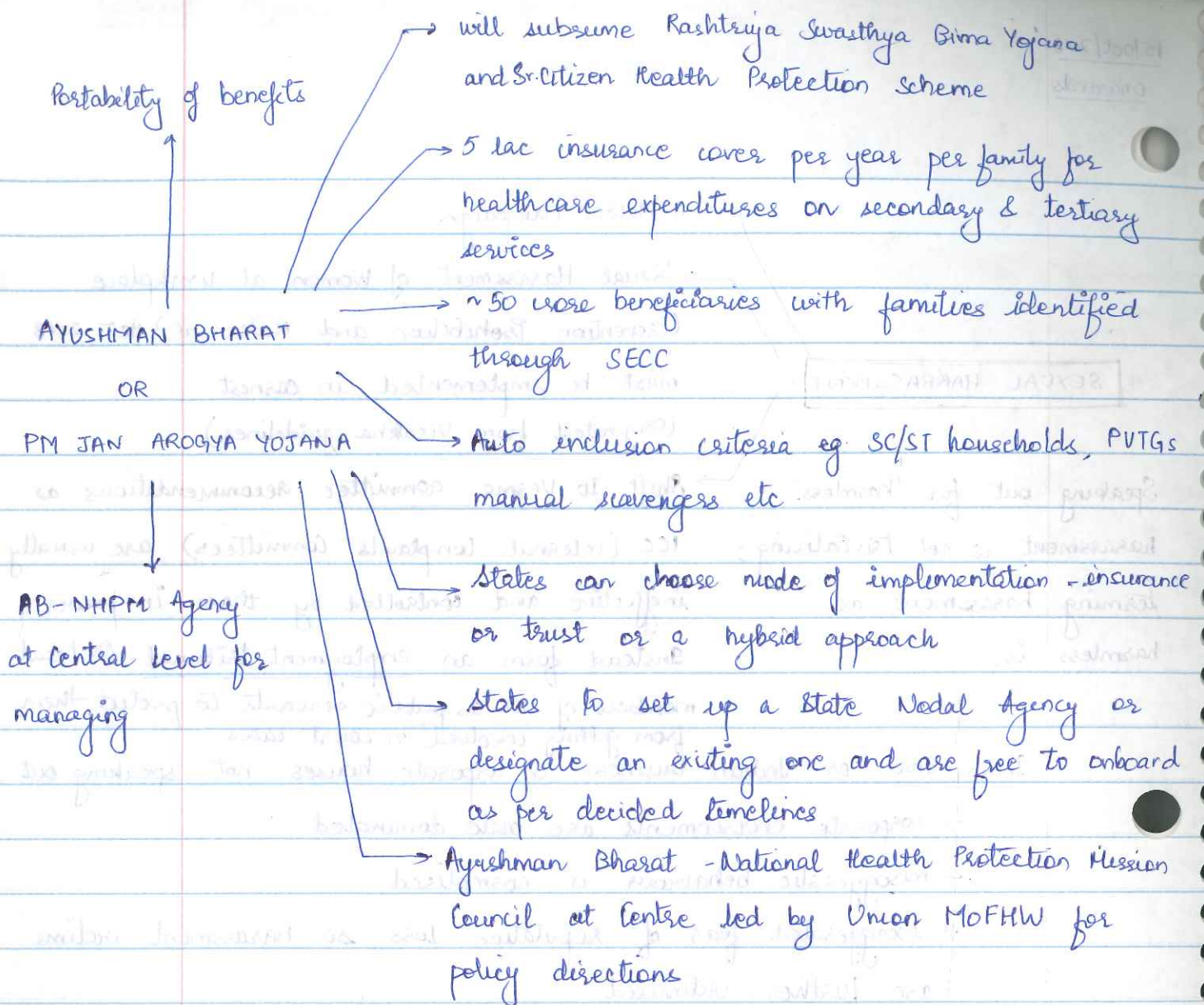
→ Shift to Verma committee recommendations as ICC (Internal Complaints Committees) are usually ineffective and controlled by those in power. Instead form an employment tribunal. Or treat members of ICC as public servants to protect them from getting involved in court cases.

India Inc. or Indian business & corporate houses not speaking out

- corporate environments are male dominated
- misogynistic behaviour is normalised
- exaggerated fear of reputation loss so harassment victims are further victimised
- no public naming & shaming
- low cultural diversities

Britain - A former minister in Tony Blair govt, Peter Hain, used his parliamentary privileges for naming Philip Green in sexual harassment cases. Philip Green had used Non Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to prevent people/media from naming him.

*A govt set committee has proposed to remove timeline of 3 months for filing a complaint. This will need amendment to Prevention of SH at Workplace Act.



Requisites for assuring success

- Collaboration as PPP routes eg. National Dialysis Programme
- Capture CSR funding by private players
- Combine primary, secondary & tertiary care in scheme by focus on Health & Wellness Centres as envisaged in National Health Policy 2017.

migration due to push factors (eg. distress migration) and pull factors (eg. better prospects)

MIGRANT LABOUR RIGHTS

→ Total 30% population is migrant as per NSSO data and census 2011

→ Gujarat exodus post sexual assault of 14-month old girl

→ No coherent statistics on migrant population

→ Fragmented market and low bargaining power leads to rampant exploitation of migrant labour

→ Interstate Migrant Workmen Act mandates :-

→ minimum wages

→ regular wage payment

→ bonus and overtime payment

→ regular working hours

→ decent living and working conditions including health & children's education

→ home govt. of states must issue licenses to contractors that take workers away and register workers, monitor their working & living conditions

→ Regulations like 80% jobs to locals only to satisfy local clamour and political compulsions

Needed measures :-

- Portability of benefits like PDS, caste certificates and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

- No domicile requirements

- Cheap housing

- Amendment to Registrar General rules for reservation benefits

→ Health schemes like PMJAY

with portable benefits

→ Strengthen post offices for remittances & ensure financial inclusion

→ Migration must increase chances of upward mobility

→ "Urban informal economy" is growing due to lack of skills in migrant people

→ A National Policy on domestic migration is needed to ensure more protection to both individual & household migrants & increase benefits from circular migration.

MEASURES TO PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE

→ Issues with Antiquities & Art Treasures Act, 1972

- obsolete
- only focussed on material heritage
- presumes guilt for holding antiquities as having been collected through illegal means
- separate treatment for public vs private collections
- considers every antiquity 100 yrs or older as an antique
- no computerised records & non availability of records to public, police

What is needed?

- focus on secular nature of antiquities rather than considering them just of religious importance as temples had thriving secular economy in ancient times

- expand capacity of public stores
- simplify process of registration & recognition by ASI

- change focus on vigilante groups that consider any holding of antiques as loot or from religious angle

→ Madras HC passed an order to computerise stock of idols & antiques & also provide ICOW centres with surveillance to keep safe custody of idols

→ India Pride Project - volunteers of private individuals interested in protecting Indian antiquities

- computerised stock of antiquities to allow easy access & prevent fabrication of provenance

- Regular updation of National Register on Antiquities (under aegis of 2007 National Mission on Antiquities & Monuments) and public awareness

MEASURES TO CURB POLLUTION

National Policy on Biofuels, 2018

to reduce paddy stub burning
& use crop residue for biofuel
and bioethanol production

crop residue can be
made into pellets to
complement fuels burnt
in power plants

Bio CNG &
bio-methanol plants
can use residue
as fuel

Issues:-

- Still a major issue esp. in Punjab, Haryana & western UP
- lack of state level guidelines and a supply chain infrastructure from farm to plant
- short harvest window (20-30 days)
- use of mechanical harvesters generates more waste
- * UNEP's recent report 'Air Pollution in Asia & Pacific' - only 8% of popⁿ in these countries gets breathable air.

Reasons for poor AQI

- Biomass burning
- Uncovered demolition & construction waste
- Traffic congestion/vehicular emissions
- Road dust generation
- Unfavorable winds & low temp.
- dust blown up from Thar Desert
- Thermal power generation

Steps taken by judiciary

- SC prohibited plying of diesel vehicles >10 yrs and petrol vehicles >15 yrs in NCR
- Directive to public transport vehicles to convert to CNG in 1998
- Phasing out of old commercial vehicles
- Ban on sale of loose 2T engine oil
- Construction of bypass roads & new ISBT

⇒ Judiciary ordering measures to curb pollution without concomitant steps by executive would not lead to any betterment in NCR's pollution levels.
Need of the hour is administrative action, cohesive planning & behavioural change on part of the public.

→ Russian President Vladimir Putin's
Oct. visit — an annual event based
on protocol agreed in 2005 :

More concrete decisions and
deals made as against
conditional promises made
in 2+2 ministerial with US

US VS RUSSIA / INDIA RELATIONS

Sale of S-400 Triumph in a no
strings attached deal

Expansion of civil nuclear energy
cooperation

Agreement on a 2nd nuclear reactor
site

Joint programme in human space flight
enabling Indian astronauts to be
trained in Russia

Agreement on the virtues of a joint
regional security architecture to
provide security to all countries in
Indo-Pacific Region

India Russia relations based on
"mutuality of interests"

→ Strategic autonomy protects India's
entanglement into US realpolitik
US Secretary of State and Defence
Secretary 2+2 Ministerial
dialogue with Union Defence &
External Affairs ministers

2+2 format only for closest
allies

Comes against backdrop of
COMCASA and India's designation
as major defence partner

→ US sees India from the lens of
countering China and move
to label Asia Pac as Indo Pac
and reducing defence aid to
Pak is a part of this strategy

→ China with the 2nd largest defence
budget, largest standing Army &
3rd largest air force is a threat
per US to regional security

→ India must make mature
strategic judgement between the
Sylla of Russia and Charybdis of
the US

* Only NATO allies & Israel given F-35
fighters

* Strategic ambivalence must make
way to strategic integrity & autonomy

- Need for more autonomy
- Director as secretary to Govt
 - 3 yrs tenure fixed (currently 2 yrs)
 - financial independence

CBI ISSUE

CBI vs CBI

Centre vs State

Selection committee per Delhi Special Police Establishment Act - PM, CJI & LS
Leader of opposition

→ Two former Directors Ranjet Sinha and A.P. Singh already under scanner for corruption cases

* CVC supervises CBI in PCA cases

→ CBI registered FIR against its own Special Director Rakesh Asthana for alleged corruption and govt. sacked Director Alok Verma ignoring protocol in a midnight decision

→ CVC overruled Director Alok Verma's objections to Rakesh Asthana's appt. w/o giving any reasons.

→ Interim Director transferred multiple officials working on critical investigations

→ AP & WB withdrew general consent for CBI investigation in these states. This will set a bad precedent as any friction b/w ruling dispensations b/w centre & state will spill over to the investigative agencies leading to erosion of public faith.

→ As per Delhi Police Special Establishment Act, a high powered committee of PM, LoP, LS and CJI or his appointee have to take a decision on divestment / transfer of the CBI director.

→ As per Vineet Narain judgement, CBI Director is ensured a 2 year tenure.

→ By taking 3 months to adjudicate on the validity of Alok Verma's divestment, SC indirectly gave the govt. a free run.

→ Govt. restricted powers of Alok Verma from taking any important decisions while reinstating him as CVC enquiry

against him is pending. SC must have reinstated him unconditionally.

→ Issues of national importance and concerning fundamental rights must be heard & resolved in one month.

ISSUE OF RBI AUTONOMY

Concerns :-

- Govt. directives under Section 7 of RBI Act to relax PCA norms & provide relief to asset reconstruction/restructuring for power sector
- Govt. suggestion to create an independent payments regulator
- Govt. demand of seigniorage that may disturb RBI's balance sheet

Required :- ✓ full operational autonomy

- ✓ Policy matters with prior Govt consultation
- ✓ Structural reforms with close coordination

Handling of issue :-

- former Governor Y.V. Reddy called public acknowledgement of grievances as 'open mouth operations'
- Y.V. Reddy spoke about Rupee overvaluation in 1997 publicly. Similarly Viral Acharya spoke of RBI's autonomy
- Govt acknowledged RBI autonomy but upheld need for consultation

Why?

- As ultimate accountability rests with democratically elected representatives
- In an emerging economy, RBI/Central Bank has multiple goals to enable full financial inclusion and maturation of markets → so close govt. coordination needed

* All NBFCs, especially housing finance companies like Dewan Housing, Indiabulls and PNB housing are facing liquidity crisis

IL&FS FIASCO - Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services defaulted on payment of term loans.

Concerns :- → overleveraged assets

→ overestimation of asset values

→ Indian workers held hostage in Ethiopia

→ over nonpayment of salaries

→ working model of IL&FS based on taking bank loans & then further lending them [Shadow banking] - all activities outside regular banking]

→ It took short term loans to finance long term projects (infrastructure)

→ Dependent of refinancing on banks which was disrupted due to NPAs

→ Infrastructure projects were stalled due to land acquisition problems (LARR Act)

→ CRA rated IL&FS AAA w/o knowing actual balance sheets

→ Lack of proper regulations

Measures :- NCLT led resolution

process to resolve issue in 6-9 months

→ asset monetisation

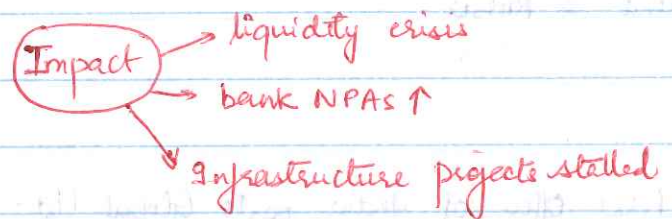
→ austerity measures

→ restructuring of loans

→ capital infusion

- As per Corporate Affairs Secretary, selling IL&FS, looking at separate verticals as separate entities and asset level sales will be used in combination to stare off the crisis

- Group restructuring has been rejected



Reserve requirements to be maintained in form of cash, gold reserves & RBI securities

* IL&FS fiasco and strict SLR norms under PCA has led to banks sitting on huge pile of cash & concomitant liquidity crisis

JCPOA DEAL

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ~ Iran Nuclear deal

US has backed out → further sanctions on Iran kicking in since Nov 5, 2018

Impacts on India

- 1) Iran 3rd largest oil exporter to India
- 2) Chabahar port bidding will become difficult
- 3) Rising fuel cost amid a rising fiscal deficit
- 4) Cost of recalibrating refineries that work on Iranian oil
- 5) Threat to regional security due to a deepened Iranian-Arab divide, less choices for Afghanistan and Iran getting closer to China & Russia

What India should do?

- 1) Stick to principle of not recognising unilateral non-UN sanctions as even "policy pragmatism" is not helpful (∵ Trump may soon negotiate with Iran)
- 2) India also agreed to not using S400 against ~~Indian~~ US interests and reducing Russian military footprint in Indian ammunition (∵ India faces CAATSA sanctions)
- 3) Revive rupee rial mechanism

* First office of India ports Global Ltd. opened at Chabahar and has taken over the operations at Shahid Beheshti port.

* The optimism over Chabahar must be tempered with reality due to below reasons

- 1) Still faces US sanctions
- 2) With US pulling out of Syria & may pull out of Afghanistan leading to deteriorated security situation in the region
- 3) With talks engaging Taliban on the anvil, Pak may spoil the game

BLASPHEMY LAWS IN PAKISTAN

- Asia Bibi case - Asia Noreen, an illiterate berry picker, accused of blasphemy by neighbours on death ordeal acquitted by Pakistan's Supreme Court.
- Lia-ul-Haq's legacy of Sec 295 that condemns accused of insulting Prophet or desecration of Quran to death or life imprisonment.
- Europe & Pope spoke in favour of Asia Bibi and a Nigerian woman captured by Boko Haram & Colosseum was coloured red in support of persecuted Christians.
- Clamour for punitive retaliation against judges, Asia and military due to Pakistan's long drawn religious rhetoric.
- Imran Khan's govt bowed to pressure from extremists and allowed petition against Asia's acquittal and put her on a no-fly list.
- The secular Punjab governor who campaigned for Asia was assassinated in 2011 while Minister of Minorities killed that year.
- Pakistan govt must enforce SC judgement and put an end to MOB RULE.

SABARIMALA ISSUE

- ↳ Situated in Periyar Tiger Reserve
- ↳ Pampa & Nilackal base camps

↳ Temple in Kerala dedicated to Lord Ayyappa

↳ Women of menstruating age (10-50 yrs) not allowed as Ayyappa is celibacy

↳ It is a temple dedicated to a celibate deity prone to human frailties. Men who undertake the pilgrimage must observe a ritual of a 41 day Mala or fast.

↳ SC struck down the discriminatory practice as against constitutional ethos of equality

↳ It is a tantric temple & not a vedic temple. Sexual energy is considered to be a very strong & potent force in tantric cults. So the ban is enforced on women of reproductive age.

↳ Though Kerala is a model state in respect to literacy, education & pedagogy has failed to make a dent in gender segregation

↳ 2 women - Kanakadurga & Bindu - in reproductive age entered the temple with police protection stealthily. The tantris then performed purification rites boosting the argument of purity vs pollution & untouchability

↳ Sabarimala has a secular character as a stopover at Vavar mosque - dedicated to Lord Ayyappa's Muslim friend Vavaraswami is compulsory.

↳ Though the courts must be mindful of religious & cultural sensibilities, in a society where most social evils & traditions have a religious coefficient, positive nudges towards equality become very important

↳ Sabarimala was a forest deity with forest dwellers - irrespective of age/gender - flocked to their deity Ayannar residence

↳ With Travancore Devaswom board taking over temple mgmt & Kerala HC's 1991 decision upholding restriction led to strict restriction on entry of women in 10-50 age cohort.

CHALLENGE TO RBI'S RESERVES

RBI reserves $\Rightarrow$

Total assets + Total reserves (which include)

Reserves built from higher seigniorage income (value of notes printed - expenses on printing & distribution) and interest paid by govt. on RBI's govt securities holdings

$\hookrightarrow$ Contingency fund to cover depreciation in value of RBI's govt. bond holdings - domestic and foreign - if yields $\uparrow$ and prices $\downarrow$. It is to cover expenses of contingencies like demonetisation, money market operations and currency printing expenses in a year of insufficient income.

$\Rightarrow$ To cover central bank's role as lender of last resort.

RBI's position

$\rightarrow$ Reserves crucial for balance sheet's health.

$\rightarrow$ RBI transferring all surplus to govt since FY14.

$\rightarrow$ Usha Thorat committee proposed basket of currencies

12% CGRA & 5.5% contingency reserve $\rightarrow$ X accepted

$\Rightarrow$ Cover for deposit insurance fund as DICGC is fully owned subsidiary of RBI

$\hookrightarrow$ Currency & Gold Revaluation Reserve to cover situation of rupee appreciating against a

$\hookrightarrow$ Investment Revaluation Account

$\hookrightarrow$ Asset development fund

$\rightarrow$ CGRA (19%) & CR (6%)

less than Malegam Committee recommendation

Need of the hour $\rightarrow$ set up a committee under Bimal Jalan to review required size of CGRA & contingency reserve

Govt position

$\Rightarrow$ Want to deal with demonetisation impact

$\Rightarrow$ Needs to fund bank recapitalisation

$\Rightarrow$ Wants to boost public spending in election year

with representatives from govt, RBI, market & academicians to take non-partisan decision.

SRI LANKA'S CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

→ 19th Amendment removed Art 47(a) from Sri Lankan Constitution and powers of President to dismiss the Prime Minister have been abolished.

→ Sri Lankan PM can be removed in case of resignation, end of Parliamentary membership and defeat of govt. policy or Budget or passing of a No-confidence Motion in the Parliament

→ President Maithripala Sirisena removed PM Ranil Wickremesinghe and appointed Mahinda Rajapaksa as the new PM.



Then prosagued the Parliament for 15 days preempting floor test



Dissolves Parliament and calls for election on Jan 5



Supreme Court stays dissolution



No confidence motion against Rajapaksa

What must India do better?

- 1) No interference in domestic politics of neighbours like Sri Lanka or Nepal as political equations in the state may change
- 2) No blockades of the likes of Nepal blockade or tough posturing
- 3) Followup on promises & reduce delay in implementation of projects
- 4) Revitalize SAARC; reduce negative list under SAFTA
- 5) Bank on multilateral than bilateral forums
- 6) Don't compete with China in areas where it lacks wherewithal; instead focus on soft power.

INDIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST?

Maldives

- PM Modi attended the swearing-in ceremony of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
- Modi's first visit to Maldives
- Attended as an audience & not on stage
- Did not reprimand Maldives when emergency proclaimed by Abdulla Yameen
- Gave benefit of doubt to Maldives on denial of visa to Indian workers and naval & military personnel
- * 2015 cancelled to register protest against visit
- treatment of opposition leaders

* China Wuhan Summit

Russia Sochi Retreat

* Pakistan Union Ministers sent to

flagging off ceremony for Kartarpur corridor

* Indo-Pak relations have not been made an electoral plank

* Possible PM visit to Pak for SAARC summit on the cards

Bangladesh

Opposition leaders called for think tank events. Issues like border demarcation, unfavourable territorial possessions and PFA sorted out.

Nepal

- Policy of 'tough love' given up
- Sushma Swaraj went to Nepal even before K.P. Oli's swearing ceremony
- Modi has paid two visits in 2018 with one planned for 'Vivaha Panchani'

* This is in contrast to 2015 blockade

Afghanistan

'Non-official' level participation in talks hosted by Russia on Taliban while India had previously refused to talk to Taliban

Sri Lanka

No tough talking or meddling / choosing sides in political crises

* Current policy of standing back while neighbours learn the risks of Chinese debt trap and over construction of infrastructure themselves.

EU - INDIA SYNERGIES

→ 2004 EU-India declaration on building a strategic partnership saw only modest success.

→ EU has released its India strategy in 2018

→ Scope of new strategy :-

1) need to conclude a strategic partnership agreement

2) intensifying dialogue on Afghanistan & Central Asia

3) strengthening technical cooperation on terrorism, deradicalisation, terrorist financing & extremism

4) need to develop defence & security cooperation

→ EU must reduce its big brotherly moralistic pontification & bureaucratic delays

Why needed?

→ Threat from Trump's maverick positions

→ China's not-so-peaceful rise

→ Better relations with EU nations & progress achieved

JOB CREATION AT THE FARMER'S DOORSTEP

Telangana Rythu Bandhu Scheme = cash transfer to farmers for non agricultural income (Rs 8000 per acre over two crop seasons)

↓ The scheme will be biased towards larger farmers with 9% popⁿ owning more than 5 acres getting 34% payout

* Acc. To NABARD survey, avg monthly income of rural households = Rs 8059 with 43% income from agriculture and remaining from construction/daily wage labour & govt. jobs

* Increase in farmer's income must go beyond MSP to cover non agricultural households so diversification is needed

Reforms in livestock

- 1) Revamp current breeding policy (based on exotic blood & artificial insemination)
- 2) National Breeding Policy to upgrade best performing indigenous breeds
- 3) More attention to buffalo breeding
- 4) Poultry breeding focussed on conservation
- 5) States must participate actively in implementing National Breeding Policy
- 6) GIS based production maps/systems
- 7) Import feed stock to overcome shortage
- 8) Focus on animal health & preventative health care
- 9) Encourage private investment
- 10) Harmonize rules & regulations across states to incentivise livestock breeding

Focus on Migrant Workers

- 1) Improve conditions of migrant workers in construction sector
- 2) Enable access to govt. schemes regardless of identity proofs
- 3) Access to Anganwadi / ICDS n/w / SSA
- 4) Penalties on non compliance with labour laws must be increased
- 5) Registration of workers with Welfare Boards must be mandatory
- 6) Registration must be linked to Jan Dhan accounts & DBT used for payments
- 7) Anti harassment laws and provision of creches
- 8) Use Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Fund for cheap / affordable housing for Migrant labour

ECONOMIC ARCHITECTURE IS NOT THE FORCE

- * Back series data for GDP shows that Indian economy might have never had graduated to a high growth phase
- * Variety of factors other than GDP show growth
eg. private investment in productive capacity that depends on both the actual and anticipated economic state and resultant profits
- * Modi govt. focussed on the architecture or framework of the economy :-
 - 1) Increased FDI :- Make in India and PM's meeting with American CEOs
 - Minimal presence and doesnot have large impact
 - 2) Unified indirect tax regime :- GST implementation due to cooperative federalism
 - However, reduced indirect tax collections
 - Poor implementation & absence of robust IT framework
 - Expansion of tax base and formalisation not as anticipated
 - 3) Formalisation & digitalisation of payment system n/w :-
 - Demonetisation led to reduced GDP growth and led to contraction of manufacturing sectors
 - 4) Minimum governance :- Monetary Policy Committee to focus on inflation without any thought about collateral damage to growth
 - High interest rates led to contraction of exports
 - Focus on fiscal consolidation led to reduced govt. spending

Timely boost to private investment must be the focus to reboot growth.

CUTTING THROUGH THE SMOG

- * Incidents of paddy stubble burning causes 20% of smog formation
- Cannot be averted by imposing fines

Reasons :-

- 1) Short harvest window due to a water conservation law in Punjab that prohibits transplantation in May
- 2) Paddy-wheat rotation introduced in 1960s that diverted cultivated area under maize, oilseeds, cotton & sugarcane to paddy. This led to land degradation, water table decline
- 3) Absence of MSP for other crops like kinnow fruit
- 4) Absence of labour esp. in Punjab where avg. landholding size has increased
- 5) Cost of "happy seeder" to avoid stubble is prohibitive and it will be used only once a year leading to unnecessary maintenance cost
- 6) Fine for stubble burning ~~must~~ is less than cost of happy seeder
- 7) Only 20% of stubble used to convert to biofuel, paper & cardboard

Measures :-

- (1) Ensure crop diversification to less water intensive crops by extending price incentives & mktg support
- (2) Can use a 'price deficiency system' as in Haryana & MP or provide investment support like Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme
- (3) Custom hiring centres for machinery like hydroseeders / happyseeders like for tractors in Rajasthan, MP, UP
- (4) Use geospatial techniques to identify areas where burning is acute and set up biofuel plants there to save on transportation costs and encourage farmers to sell the stubble for extra income.
- (5) Defiberised rice straw can be used in hydroseeding for erosion control.

Good features :-

- Move from erstwhile Planning Commission's tendency of preparing for plans to actual planning
- Says that all Indians must recognize their role in planning
- Affirms that planning must be rooted in ground realities
- Focus on vigorous implementation of 15 reports of Second ARC.
- Employment & labour reforms have been given the highest priority
- Goal to increase manufacturing sector from 16% to 25% of GDP
- Focuses on increasing tax base, improving infrastructure and creation of midsize clusters of small enterprises
 - * Formal clusters will act as link b/w formal & informal sector rather than burdening informal sector with costs of formalisation.
- Codification of labour laws into 4 codes by 2019
- Progressive objectives and follows SDGs.
- Major focus on renewable energy
- Focus on organic farming & zero budget farming model
eg. Maharashtra's Subash Palekar model.

What can be bettered?

→ Although NITI Aayog has conducted wide consultations, it must garner feedback on the quality of these consultations

→ Focus in terms of employment must be on shape of growth so as to provide more employment & wage/ income growth rather than only focussing on size of a sector

→ Social security for all workers (including domestic workers) since the labour mkt trend is towards contractualisation & informalisation of labour

→ Unionism must be promoted for such workers to provide them the advantage of collective bargaining power

→ Employers must be motivated to invest in capital development & investment in skill development for resources.

→ Stress on single window clearance will defeat the purpose of EIAs

→ Focuses only on air pollution, water pollution, solid waste mgmt & forestry.

Doesn't focus on water conservation, degradation, soil erosion, etc.

→ Doesn't reverse the trend on sole focus on forest dept. and doesn't move to focus on wetland, desert, mountain conservation dept

→ Mining ~~is~~ focus only on cutting edge technology & not to make it sustainable & environment friendly

→ Focuses on push on river interlink & hydropower projects even in areas with fragile ecosystems

→ Organic farming focus is on HVV seeds that caused loss of agricultural biodiversity during green revolution as well.

→ Nothing for dryland farmers (eg Deccan Development society Telangana)

29/12/18

TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) BILL, 2018

→ Bill passed by Lok Sabha : strong opposition by transgender community & parliamentarians

1) CONCERNS :- 1) SC had ruled in NALSA vs Union of India that transgenders & intersex persons have right to self identify their gender whereas the current Bill proposes a District Screening Committee for purpose of recognition of transgenders. DSC consists of CMO, psychologist/psychiatrist that defeats purpose of self identification

2) Bill allows identification as only transgender and not as male or female. This is against SC judgement that allowed for any gender identification

3) NALSA judgement and 2014 Bill provided for 2% reservation in education & public employment whereas 2018 Bill does not provide for any reservation.

4) Bill makes it a criminal offence to force transgenders into begging; this would criminalize the community that is majorly involved in begging or sex work.

5) Does not include positive rights like inheritance of property, family rights like adoption and against domestic violence. It also does not make sexual harassment and rape laws gender agnostic

LIFELINES BEYOND FARM WAIVERS

→ Rural agrarian distress - farmers' march and farm loan waivers resorted to in most states like UP, MP, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, AP

→ As per NSSO's Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households (2013) 52% farming households are indebted

Loan waivers issues :-

- 1) don't cover nonlanded households, tenant farmers, etc.
- 2) Only help where debt is from formal sources
- 3) Crowd out private investment
- 4) Reduces public funding and increases budget fiscal deficit

Farmer is burdened because:-

- 1) lack of compensation during drought & disasters
- 2) failure of crop insurance scheme
- 3) deficit due to prices falling below MSPs

→ A Bill developed by All India Kisan Sangharsha Committee



provide institutional credit system

protection from debt trap in bad years

- All farmers to be granted access to institutional credit - land owning, sharecroppers, women farmers, animal rearers, tenants and adiwases
- Registration of all cultivators & providing them Kisan Credit Cards
- Establish farmers' distress and disaster relief commissions at the national & state levels based on Kerala's Farmers' Debt Relief Commission.
- The Commission to have power to declare an area disease affected based on incidence of pest attacks or natural disasters. This would lead to kicking in of measures like loan rescheduling, interest waiver, one time settlement, etc.

→ RBI's Pradhan Mantri Kisan loan scheme must be implemented

→ Agriculture must be made remunerative by lowering i/p costs, promoting farmers' collectives and sustainable modes of agriculture.

FINANCIAL DEBACLES & RATING AGENCY MODELS

→ Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs) under fire post IL&FS fiasco.
The rating of the IL&FS was not revised regularly based on sinnersing problems.

→ Models of CRAs -

ISSUER PAYS

- current model
- the one who wants to be rated pays so a potential conflict of interest
- the fee is collected in the beginning so no scope of influence
- the credibility of rating agency is market & trust driven
- allows public access to rating at a reasonable cost
- ratings are publicly available

INVESTOR PAYS

- the model pre-empt CRA-issuer nexus
- however, investors can influence CRAs to give lower than actual ratings to negotiate higher coupon rates
- Investors can also resist downgrades to avoid mark to market losses on securities
- Investors can prevent free dissemination of information / rating

REGULATOR PAYS

- No scope of issuer-CRA or investor-CRA nexus
- Regulator can mandate free dissemination of rating for all
- Will not ensure market determined prices to the CRA
- Once business is assured, there would be no incentive to improve quality / excellence
- Moral hazard when rating is regulator endorsed.

MAINSTREAMING VICTIMS OF CRIMES

⇒ Victim Impact Assessments that record verbal or written statements from the victim of a crime and the amount of damage - personal, monetary & psychological, caused to the victim must be made mandatory in Indian criminal justice system.

⇒ It is mandatory in US, Canada, Australia and many other countries.

⇒ Indian criminal justice system is accused-centric and victim is considered a witness.

⇒ Since a fixed punishment system does not exist in India and severity of crime is a factor in deciding the severity & quantum of punishment, victim impact assessment can feed into this to make the system victim centric. While the accused is mandatorily heard, there is no obligation to hear the victim.

⇒ Rigorous imprisonment and capital punishment must also take care of VIA.

BANGLADESH'S NATIONAL ELECTION RESULTS

→ Sheikh Hasina's Awami League won the national elections with a huge margin - won 288 seats in a unicameral Parliament which has 300 directly elected seats and 50 seats reserved for women.

→ The Bangladesh Nationalist Party led opposition coalition has said that there was intimidation and malpractices.

→ Sheikh Hasina's biggest achievements:-

- high level of economic growth (17.6%)

- reduced poverty

- high level of India Bangladesh relationship

- engagement at level of BIMSTEC & BOIN

From perspective of India:-

→ Bangladesh largest trading partner for India

→ Cooperation in energy, security, connectivity and intelligence intensified

→ Padma multipurpose bridge & Ahaura - Agartala rail link

→ Bangladesh provided cyber connectivity to Agartala

→ India partnering with Bangladesh nuclear power programme - Rooppur

→ Generous line of credits to offset asymmetry in balance of trade

→ Liberal visa regime

Nitty points

→ Growing influence of China in Bangladesh

→ Issue of repatriation of Rohingya refugees

→ NRC exercise in Assam

→ Bangladesh's military dependant on Chinese hardware

RAFALE DEAL

- Govt. initially wanted 126 fighters
- Eventually went for 36 fighters
- Escalation in cost as the India specific Enhancements (ISEs) that were to be staggered across 126 planes now in 36 planes.
- ISEs are non-recurring costs; India should have negotiated a deal with a follow on provision to have the option to purchase more Rafales & reduce per craft cost by spreading the design & development cost across upgrades.
- All Rafales are in flyaway condition
- New bids being sought for 110 crafts with 15% in flyaway condⁿ
- Anticorruption clauses were waived;
- Sovereign guarantee was replaced with Letter of Comfort
- Escrow a/c was done away with.

Issues

- The Supreme Court judgement mentioned a 'CAG report' although an enquiry by CAG did not happen
- Govt. has asked for a review of the judgement whereas Opposition has called for cancellation
- Govt cannot direct CAG to present a redacted report as CAG is a Constitutional body accountable to Parliament only.
- JPC is being demanded but these are partisan bodies
- Govt is hiding behind a general security clause in India France agreement of 2008.
- CAG report mentioned around 2% gain over 2014 deal & 1 month saving in time of delivery.

LESSONS IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FROM KERALA

- October 2018 "Astana Declaration" committed to primary care
- A reaffirmation of Alma Ata Declaration of 1978.
- Providing primary healthcare to all a SDG.
- Kerala's "Aardram Mission" launched in 2016 to ensure primary care to all

Primary care includes

- Preventive
- Promotive
- Curative
- Rehabilitative
- Palliative

Issues:- Most programs have a ratio of one team per 3000 population

should ideally be 2500 per team while Kerala reduced the target population to 10000



Reducing the ratio of target popⁿ : healthcare teams would require huge funds or human resource



this would increase demand for healthcare & concomitant rise in prices of drugs, vaccines & equipment

{ Funds allotted to healthcare must be increased & "primary care" must be made the central premise for public health



Currently India has only PG course in Family Medicine

{ Bridge gap courses in community health and capacity development courses for mid level service providers



Will involve fund mgmt PMJAY / Ayushman Bharat type scheme can be involved

{ Since private service providers provide >60% of health services, insurance must help patients cover costs and private practitioners must be brought into the fold



Capacity building, attitude & support from referral services to increase trust & for better outcomes

→ Global scenario improving with US growth showing an uptick

→ US-China Trade war

→ Britain's exit from EU uncertain

→ Agrarian stress in India

→ Lower than required growth

→ Weaker Rupee owing to rise in fuel prices

→ RBI estimates 2018-19 growth forecast at 7.4%.

2017-18 dedicated an entire chapter to 'Timely Justice'. Working capacity

of HCs & SC = 63.6% only

Economic Survey

Dependency rates of disputes is so high in India that

Concerns

→ Investment ratio is reducing

→ Mainly due to NPA crisis, GST and demonetisation

→ Investment depends upon productivity of capital & inverse incremental capital op ratio

→ This in turn depends on skill level of labour, infrastructure & technology

Required - keep incremental capital-op ratio at 4

- Reinvigorate investment spirit through conducive economic & political environment

→ Agrarian distress

→ Inflation in pulses and vegetables down due to bumper stock / off

→ Hedging against crop losses

→ Consolidation of land holdings

needed to allow adoption of farm technology to boost op

→ Dependency on imported oil

→ Banking system in doldrums

→ Resolution of NPA problem

→ Revival of NBFCs

→ Adequate provisioning & capital infusion to increase bank balance sheet robustness and bringing banks out of PCA framework through support

→ Employment growth is dismal

→ This is despite economic growth because growth is due to better utilisation of existing capacity rather than generation of new capacity

→ More formal employment generation

→ Structural changes under process in IT sector

→ Focus on reducing CAD which is growing due to a weak global scenario

→ Fiscal deficit 15% above estimate in first 8 months of 2018-19

RIGHT TO PRIVACY & THREATS TO IT

→ SC propounded that Right to Privacy is a fundamental right in Indian Constitution Art. 21 in KS Puttaswamy case

* INDIA'S CYBERSECURITY POLICY

- systems
- n/w
- data
- programs

- Focus on building security and resilience
- CERT and sectoral CERTs for responding to cyber incidents
- Data localisation norms being postulated
- Identifying Critical Infrastructure and propounding proper risk assessment & guidelines for protecting this critical infrastructure
- As per ITO Cybersecurity Index, India ranks 22nd globally
- Encouraging open standards
- Cyber Swachhata Kendras for cleaning botnets & malware.

SECTIONS OF IT ACT

Sec 66 A - struck down in Shreya Singhal case
Up to 3 years jail term for sending msgs through communication device that are offensive or of a menacing character and cause hurt, annoyance.

Sec 43 - stealing computer devices

Section 67 - Punishment for obscene data

Sec 69 - allows to agencies to access and decrypt info on any communication device of any person or organization for national security

Aadhar Amendments

- Lok Sabha passed the Amendment w/o any debate
- Aims to amend Aadhar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits & Services) Act 2016, Indian Telegraph Act, Prevention of Money Laundering Act.
- Right to withdraw for children > 18 yrs
- In its Aadhar judgement, the SC had struck down Section 57 of Aadhar Act that allowed private entities to use Aadhar to authenticate people. Voluntary authentication allowed.
- The amendment allows private entities to use offline authentication for Aadhar.
- Four modes of authentication allowed - under Aadhar Act, offline verification using Aadhar, passport & any other officially valid document govt may notify.
- Disclosure of Aadhar in interest of national security on orders of Secretary but the SC injunction of attaching a Judicial Officer (Judge of HJ) not in provisions.

→ Recent case of imprisonment of Huawei CFO - Sabrina Meng in Canada at behest of US.

Reasons - Huawei has surpassed Apple as 2nd largest maker of smartphones which soils US

- There are cybersecurity concerns with Huawei devices containing microchips for snooping but these are not backed with any irrefutable evidence
- Huawei founder close to China dispensation & Army
- Actual reason cited that Huawei transgressed US sanctions in financial deals with Iran
- Huawei has large stakes in 5G technology

The use of 'long-arm jurisdiction' is controversial as it is mostly political and may lead to retaliation, escalation & deterioration of relations.

'Long-arm jurisdiction' implies a country to enforce its law on foreign entities through law courts.

* Section 69 allows interception, access and decryption of stored data and data on fly for public order, security, sovereignty, friendly relations, prevent cognizable offences & investigation. Every order for snooping has to be approved by Home Secretary & reviewed every 2 years.

* GDPR - GDPR (General Data Protection Regime) is a Europe wide data protection law that replaces Data Protection Act 1998. Every organisation that deals in personal data has to appoint a Data Protection Officer. 6 principles for data protection are - lawfulness, fairness & transparency; data minimisation; purpose limitation; accuracy; storage limitation; integrity, confidentiality & accountability.

Focus must be on addressing quality issues & challenges in education

10% QUOTA FOR EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT FOR ECONOMICALLY WEAKER

Govt. passed a constitutional amendment to allow 10% quota to ~~economically~~ economically weak upper castes including minority sections like Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, etc.

Eligibility :-

- Income $\leq$ 8 lac per annum

- less than 5 acre land

- House $<$ 100 sq yards in notified municipal area or $<$ 200 sq yards in non-notified area

Poverty is not an immutable character; reservations are not poverty eradication schemes.

Reservations do not allow proportional representation, they allow sufficient / reasonable representation

Govt. already has the policy of differential ^{treatment} representation for poor sections in various schemes.

- IHDS survey 98% households $\leq$ 8 lac.

- NSS 2011-12 99% households per capita expenditure below 8 lac.

The constitutional amendment was brought in with no citizen participation or Parliamentary debate

- Violates the 50% cap for reservations as set up in Indira Swahney judgement.

- SC had quashed 10% quota for economic backward in Indira Swahney case

- Equality is a basic feature of Indian Constitution as propounded in Nagaraj

case 2006, so 50% cap must otherwise edifice of equality of opportunity would collapse.

- SC also propounded that economic weakness cannot be the only criteria for reservations

- The cap of 8 lac p.a. is equal to creamy layer for OBC so it brings an uneasy parity b/w OBC & economically weak savarnas.

- Only 76 lac people declared income ⁵ ~~70~~ lac

- Will lead to fake income certificates

- Implementation issues wrt how eligibility will be decided.

- Will eat into ^{non-} quota seats (10%) on which only non SC/ST & OBC will be allowed

NORTH KOREAN ISSUE

1945 - World war over. Korean peninsula divided along 38th parallel

1992 - fall of Soviet Union

Korean regime looking for international acceptance

Tactical nuclear weapons removed from Korean peninsula

US - South Korea military exercise "Team Spirit" discontinued



1993 - N. Korea signs Agreement for non-aggression & cooperation

Team Spirit Resumed

N. Korea threatens withdrawal from NPT



1995 - Bill Clinton tries for a thaw in relations, Promises humanitarian aid and building 2 light water reactors



2002 - George Bush withdraws from talks and puts sanctions

N. Korea throws IAEA inspectors out & undergoes proliferation

Six party talks fail

2016 - N. Korea tests ICBM across Pacific

- N. Korea supposed to declare nuclear arsenal but hasn't

- US hasn't eased sanctions

US-NKorea talks held in Singapore in June 2018

Kim Jong-Un met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Jan 2019

China - growing stature as global military power

- interlocuting b/w various parties

N. Korea - wants discontinuation of annual military exercise b/w US-S. Korea

- easing of sanctions

- has created a peace zone in the demilitarised zone at the border

- wants a formal peace agreement with S. Korea as against current ceasefire / Truce since 1953

- wants "denuclearisation of Korean peninsula" to contain wider umbrella for US, S. Korea & Japan as well.

1. Britain 1838
2. 1979 Soviet 3. 2001 US

AFGHANISTAN ISSUE (mainly about ethnic conflict)

US President Donald Trump has declared a drawdown of troops and pointed at a speedy withdrawal from 18 year long war.

* Pashtun always controlled Afghanistan & want control now

US

- looks at issues from its own geopolitick advantages
- wants to reduce its involvement in overseas conflicts
- has been vacillating in its response to & treatment of Pakistan
- reduce troop strength by 58% in 2 years

Russia

- Wants to protect itself from radicalisation in southern parts & central Asian region
- Held talks with Taliban in Moscow

India

- Has contributed \$3 bn to Afghan reconstruction like libraries, Assembly building, military training
- Sent 'retired diplomats for non official representation' to Moscow talks

China

- Will readily try to capture space vacated by US though has been reluctant to send troops
- Increasingly acting as power broker for mediation
- was a part of all major talks like Moscow talks including Taliban
- part of Quadrilateral Coordination Group with US, Afghanistan & Pak
- In 2012, allowed Afghanistan into SCO as observer state
- promised training of 2000 law enforcers across SCO states
- Investing in infrastructure projects like train link across Uzbekistan

Wants peace in its own border provinces and central Asian nations that are crucial to BRI initiative

An agreement for non interference must be signed or lines of that signed in 1990s with UN support

- * Must recognize that Taliban represents Pashtun nationalist sentiments and must try to break dormancy in diplomatic presence.
- * Must boost soft power and champion an Afghan led & owned process.

EVMS

Transparent ← Voting in Elections in a democracy must be → Secret

→ Users can't see who they voted for was recorded correctly



Verifiable

→ Cannot be verified later except for use of VVPATs

↓
→ Without the use of totaliser machines, booth level data is discernable

→ Despite use of technology, counting remains an opaque process
→ They may be tamperproof but are easily prone to malfunctioning

→ Sampling 1 VVPAT/EVM per constituency is too small a sample size and will lead to 98-99% times missing to identify a faulty EVM as pointed by a Retd. IAS Mr. Ashok Vardhan Reddy

→ EVM's were discontinued by Germany & Netherlands as any unjustified suspicion can be avoided.

G+I talks - India Iran Pak Afg.

China VS Russia

→ Pashtuns, Hazaras, Turks, Balochs - so ethnic crisis

- * Afghanistan has never allowed any foreign countries to control its policy
- * Its geography dictates its government policy
- * Tribal leaders try to control opium production (Golden Crescent)
- * Present Afghan policy is affected by corruption, economic mismanagement
- * Afghan National Army after 17 yrs of training is not able to counter Taliban

→ overlapping

Any country with a prominent identity are prone to disintegration
Countries with cross cutting identities not prone to disintegration

FREEBIES AND ELECTIONS

An increasing trend of distributing freebies during elections / festivals

- Pongal gift as Rs 1000 in Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu & West Bengal among the highest providers of freebies

- Increased confiscation of liquor & cash in Karnataka elections

Concerns :- 1) Take away the free & fair nature of elections as voter can be swayed using freebies

} SC considers this a part of public policy in line with

DPSP objectives

2) Can be considered as a corrupt practice under Section 123 of RPA. But SC considers this as corrupt only when independent candidates dole out freebies whereas for those affiliated to political parties, this is not considered such.

3) Led to high debt to GDP ratio while taking away focus from debt for productive investments like industrialisation & employment generation. Maharashtra has good debt to GDP as compared to Tamil Nadu.

4) Freebies can be equated to using public money for creating private assets

Measures :- 1) An empowered Election Commission which finalises if such freebies are corrupt acts under RPA in consultation with political parties

2) An independent and empowered police commission to take up investigations without political interference.

3) Finance Commission must decide devolvement / devolution criteria based on states fiscal performance & debt/GDP ratio.

CAUTION FOR BUDGET/ECONOMY

→ Will be a vote on account or interim budget

→ Slowing economy $7.6\% \rightarrow 7.2\% \rightarrow 6.8\%$

quarters on quarter FY 18-19

→ CSO estimates for GDP growth lower than RBI / World Bank

→ Dependency on imported oil that leads to shocks to economy

→ Fiscal deficit to be contained at 3.2% GDP but states' debt to GDP ↑ed 15% over the estimated budget for FY 18-19 in first 8 months

→ Election year so populist promises may derail fiscal consolidation

→ Speculations and uncertainty around govt change have subdued private investment

→ Shock to market, trade protectionism & trade wars revive gold demand leading to shock to foreign reserves

US PULLOUT FROM SYRIA

• US has been involved in a battle in Syria since they were supporting SDF against Bashar al Assad's govt.

• Naw, allying with SDF / Kurds to uproot extremists & ISIS & Iran fighters

(Peshmerga)

• Turkey views SDF led by Kurds as offshoot of PKK that it considers as terrorist organisation. (Kurds demand Kurdistan and are secessionists in Turkey)

• Sudden declaration of Trump on troop withdrawal threatens Kurds as Turkey may raid them. Trump should have talked to all regional players before announcing his decision and must have used this as a bargaining chip to ensure protection of Kurd fighters

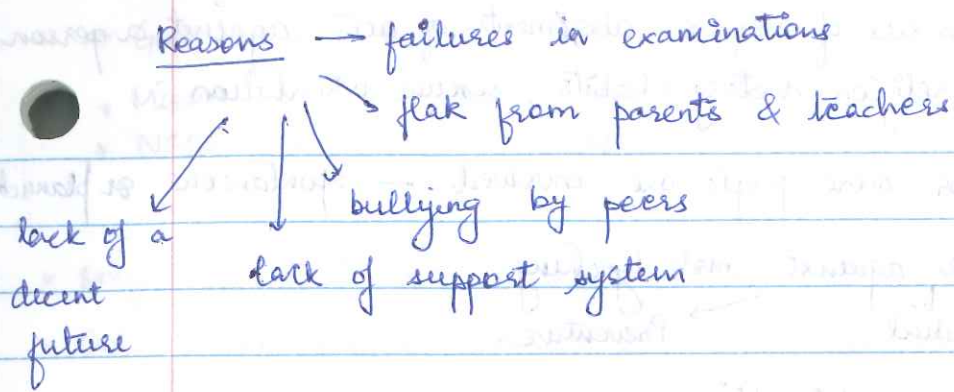
LET THE GRASSROOTS BREATHE

- Congress govt. in Rajasthan has reversed BJP's decision of minimum educational qualifications for contesting Panchayat polls.
- Haryana also introduced this eligibility criteria and that candidate's house must have a functional toilet.
- These decisions lead to ineligibility of a large no. of vulnerable sections like SC/ST, women in states where literacy rates are low.
- ~~Chandigarh HC~~ SC in Rajbala vs State of Haryana upheld the decision of the govt. as educated candidates would lead to better administration.
- 73rd & 74th Amendments were for increasing representation of grassroots & not for administrative convenience.
Also 13% of MPs are under matriculation which is less than % of women MPs.
- States have not implemented provisions of 73rd & 74th AA fully. TN has postponed Panchayat elections since 2011. Elections to Vishakhapatnam MC were last held in 2007.
- An empowered SEC is must that should be tasked with delimitation of constituencies as state govt's delay local govt elections under this garb.

PLASTIC POLLUTION

- India took a "Beat Plastic Pollution" pledge on World Environment Day (5 June)
- Plastic Waste Mgmt Rules, 2016 much publicised and aimed to eliminate single use plastics.
 - 40% → 50% min.
- 22 states & UTs have joined in - Puducherry the latest
- Bengaluru's waste collection reduced from 2000 kg to 100 kg / day
- Bring "Extended Producer's Responsibility" and enforce it
- Collect back system for packaging, e-commerce brands and FMCG companies
- Innovative measures to reduce plastic in pharma, health, FMCG & construction sectors
- Better municipal waste mgmt practices:
- Ecofriendly & cheaper alternatives to plastic
- Plastic 6-8% in bitumen mix can be used for paving roads
 - Less than 180°C temp. to prevent release of harmful fumes
 - Improves resistance to water induced damage.

STUDENT SUICIDES



* Suicides in Navodaya Vidyalayas

* Rohith Vemula case

* Kota cases

* ILO - World Economic & Social Outlook Report states that by 2019 job status of 77% Indians would be vulnerable.

* Education system has failed to provide decent socio economic opportunities and jobs to students

Recommendations - Improved pedagogical techniques

- Better job opportunities & skilling

- Implementation of Justice Ranganath Commission report

* Equal Opportunities cell with Antidiscrimination officers

* Counsellors & psychologists at schools & universities for students, research scholars & faculty / non teaching staff

* Stronger induction programmes

* Local guardian system for outstation students

* Grievance redressal & monitoring committees for probing university overreach

- Strong research culture in UG courses and local issues baked into syllabus for participative approach.

- Happiness Curriculum - as by Delhi govt.

MOB LYNCHING

* Any act of violence or series of acts or abetment of acts against a person on account of caste, sex, religion, dietary habits, sexual orientation

wherein a group of two or more people are involved — spontaneous or planned

* SC gave an 11 pt agenda against mob lynching

Punitive

Remedial

Preventive

- Every distt. to have a nodal officer

- Fast track / designated courts in every distt. for trying cases in a fixed time frame

- Identify hot spot districts where lynchings have happened

- Victim rehabilitation / compensation schemes

- Strict action against perpetrators and strong messaging

- No victim victimisation

- Every police officer to be responsible for dispersing vigilante mobs

- Max^m sentence to be awarded & police officers to be held liable for dereliction of duty

* Manipur became the first state to frame a law

- Does not consider solitary hate crimes

- No previous govt. sanction required to prosecute police officers responsible

- No need to get state govt. approval for prosecution under IPC 153A

- Must have included a more gender & vulnerability sensitive rehabilitation scheme

- Must include command responsibility provision

* 20 cases across India

SKILL INDIA

- * Govt set up National Skill Development Corporation in 2015
- * Mission to Train 400 mn youth by 2022
- * NSDF, NSDM are components

- * Only 2-3% of India's workforce is skilled formally
- * Only 1.4mn people skilled so far - 8% placed

Issues

- ⇒ No comprehensive assessment done for performance of 1st phase of scheme
- ⇒ Most skilling initiatives for short term courses
- ⇒ No sector specific targets
- ⇒ Large no. of Sector Skill Councils (~40)
- ⇒ Overlapping mandate of NSRF, NSDC, NSDA, etc.
- ⇒ Poor quality of skilling at NSDC funded private institutes

Competency based framework for organising qual.
knowledge ←
skill ← National Skill Qualification F/w
aptitude ←

- 9th standard mapped to Level 1 and so on
- India Skills Competition held in which Maharashtra won
- five pillars of skill ecosystem :-
 - 1) ITIs
 - 2) Secondary schools / Polytechnics
 - 3) NSDC funded private institutes
 - 4) Corporate inhouse
 - 5) 16 Ministries

Sharda Prasad Committee Report - Align ITIs & corporate houses to NSRF

- Make progression dependant on mandatory completion of previous trainings
- Clear definition of course curriculum
- Introduce Bachelor of Vocation & Bachelor of Skills courses
- Streamline number of SSCs based on National Industrial Classification
- Broadbased skill courses that allow switching jobs

DIGITAL INDIA REPORT CARD

A flagship programme of the Indian govt. to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Digital Infrastructure as a
core utility

CSC

Digital empowerment
of Citizens

Governance & Services
on Demand

Pillars of the Programme

Broad Band
Highways

Universal Access
to Mobile
connectivity

Public
Internet
programmes

E-governance

Electronics
manufacturing

E-delivery of
services

IT for jobs

Progress report

→ Teledensity increased to 83%

→ ~500 mn internet users

→ 300 mn smart phone users

→ BHIM app, Digilocker

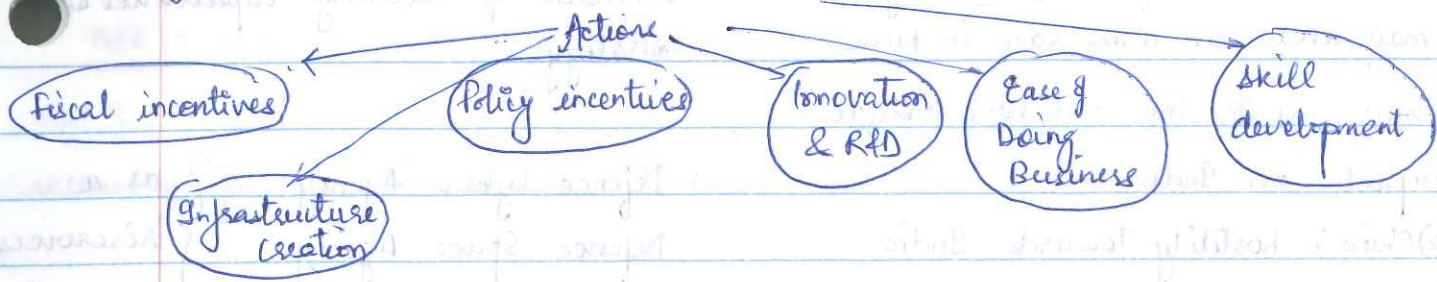
→ PMODISHA for e-literacy

→ Smart city e-governance part
is slow in implementation

→ low electrification & digital
divide still a concern area

MAKE IN INDIA PERFORMANCE

A flagship scheme of Modi govt. to facilitate investment, foster innovation, building best in class manufacturing infrastructure in India.



Progress Report :-

- FDI inflow increased to \$ 60 bn an year
- FDI regime liberalised in aviation, defence manufacturing, pharma, telecom, insurance sectors, etc.
- EDB rank improved to 77
- Indigenous manufacturing in defence - LCA, Dhanush, Akash
- RCS scheme & 6 greenfield airports
- Electronics manufacturing hubs
- Asia's largest meditech park in AP
- 7 Megafood parks
- PM KVV for skill development

What needs to be done?

- Enforcement of contracts to improve EDB further
- Improve education, skilling & focus on research & innovation
- Mid size clusters connecting formal & informal sectors
- Skilling must be the focus
- Streamline labour laws

SEZ Policy

INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

Recent Developments:-

- 1) US withdrawal from INF Treaty may ensue an arms race in Russia, China and US. This will have oblique impact on India
- 2) China's hostility towards India & support to Pakistan
- 3) Fourth Generation Warfare (FGW) use by Maoists & separatists
- 4) Increasing use of underwater drones that raise questions about the survivability of SSBNs
- 5) China's String of Pearls to corner / trap India
- 6) Guadar Port as a probable Chinese military base
- 7) US withdrawal from Afghanistan may cause disturbances in Kashmir

* Naresh Chandra Committee recommends overhaul of military capabilities & strategy.

* Defence Cyber Agency
Defence Space Agency
Special Operations Division } as a triservices command

↓
Decision to create them as commands under Navy, Airforce & Army respectively will defeat the purpose

* Chinese pioneer capabilities in quantum computing, AI & 3D printing demands India boost its cyber protection & offensive capabilities

HIGHER EDUCATION SCENARIO

- * Ministry of HRD report All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2017-18 states that GER = 25.8%.

GER = Index of proportion of citizens in 18-23 age cohort - in every sample size of 100 - who have structurally secured entry into tertiary education w/o accounting for the exit figures / drop-outs.

UGC failures :-

- * Occupy UGC student protests against withdrawal of non-NET fellowships
- * Micromanagement and poor quality of colleges
- * Less autonomy.

IOE scheme - private universities like

Tier University to be benefitted even though it has no infrastructure

- * 200 point roster system has been re-instated by an Ordinance on Mar 8/2019.

AFGHANISTAN ISSUE AND REPRECUSIONS

* US has kept aside "Afghan-led", "Afghan-owned" and "Afghan-controlled" reconciliation effort by seeking to conduct talks with Taliban w/o any representation from Afghan's government

What kind of ethnic govt. should lead Afghanistan after US pullout?

Questions

Will Pakistan allow the growth of an independent sovereign Afghanistan?

Will the peace agreement build on the legitimacy of the govt.?

Is Taliban's mission of establishing an Islamic govt. compatible with principles of plurality, elections-based democracy and power sharing?

What kind of guarantee mechanism will be put in place to ensure success of the peace agreement

Causes of conflict → Religious

Ethnic

External

ROHINGYA ISSUE

* India repatriated Rohingya refugees and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sought a report from India on this deportation in Oct 2018.

* India has not signed the UN Refugee convention 1951 and 1967 Protocol.

* India cannot claim non signatory status to mention exemption under the Refugee convention as this forms the basic humanitarian law and proposes that non-refoulement principle must be followed.

* Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum & refuge and must not be deported in case of threat of physical or mental harm.

* Art 51 of Indian Constitution imposes promotion of international law & treaty obligations and must therefore point to eligible right of refugees in India.