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DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

**16.09.2021**

**FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS**

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH  
INDIAN EXPRESS - IE  
BUSINESS LINE - BL  
ECONOMIC TIMES - ET  
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI

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## ESSAY PAPER

### Editorial

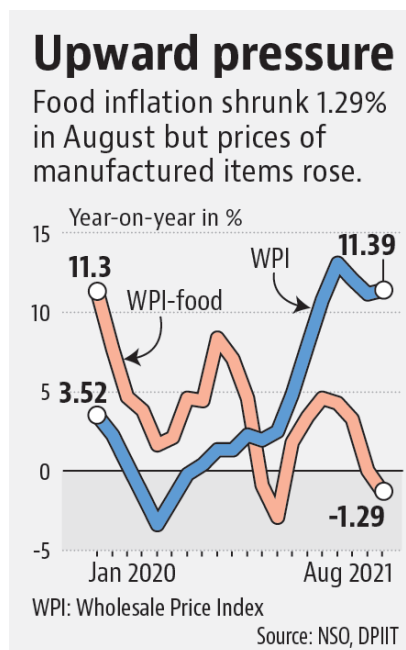
**Q- Cutting fuel taxes is a sure-shot way to address a major component of price pressures. Analyse?**

**INTRODUCTION =** The latest retail inflation data suggest, at first flush, that price pressures have begun to moderate in the economy, with the August print for CPI showing inflation having slowed for a second straight month to a 5.3% pace, after July’s 5.59%.



Source: MoSPI

Price trends among the constituents of the **Consumer Price Index** and the latest **Wholesale Price Index**-based inflation, however, show that it would be premature to drop the guard on price gains.



**Reasons to be wary -**

1. For one, the year-earlier inflation reading was elevated thus imparting a favourable base effect.
2. Month-on-month, however, the CPI nudged up 0.25% from July, belying the inference of softening inflation.
3. And the pace of price gains in at least three essential food components speeded up from the preceding month, with meat and fish, dairy and oils and fats posting significant accelerations.
  - a. Edible oils have been on a tear for months now — the August print was 33% after July's 32.5% — and an earlier round of cuts in import duties have had little impact in cooling their prices, forcing the Centre to announce another tranche of duty reductions this month.
  - b. Inflation in two other vital protein sources, eggs and pulses, also continued to remain a cause for concern.
  - c. A persistent and **wider deflation in vegetable prices was the main positive contributor to the easing in overall food and beverages inflation last month.**
  - d. The pace of inflation in fuel and light, clothing and footwear, health as well as household goods and services all ratcheted up last month.
  - e. Transport and communication, which includes pump prices of the main automotive fuels of **petrol and diesel, stayed stuck in double digits at 10.2%** albeit after a 30 basis points easing from July's 10.5% pace.
  - f. And the WPI data show higher transportation costs combined with input price pressures fanned faster inflation in manufactured products as well, sending the segment's pace to 11.4%, a fourth straight month of double-digit price gains.
4. The outlook for inflation is far from sanguine if one considers that **IHS Markit's PMI survey for services revealed input costs** rose in August at the fastest rate in four months

Thus, retail inflation this year is to hover close to or exceed the RBI's mandated monetary policy upper threshold of 6%. Policymakers are only too well aware that ultimately, inflation is not just about a point reading but far more about consumers' and businesses' expectations of the trend in prices.

**Way Forward –**

Fears of future high inflation dampen sentiment and thus retard economic activity –

- Cutting fuel taxes is a sure-shot way to address a major component of price pressures and it is time the Government bites the bullet and acts to provide a more abiding solution.

## GS 2

## ❖ Polity

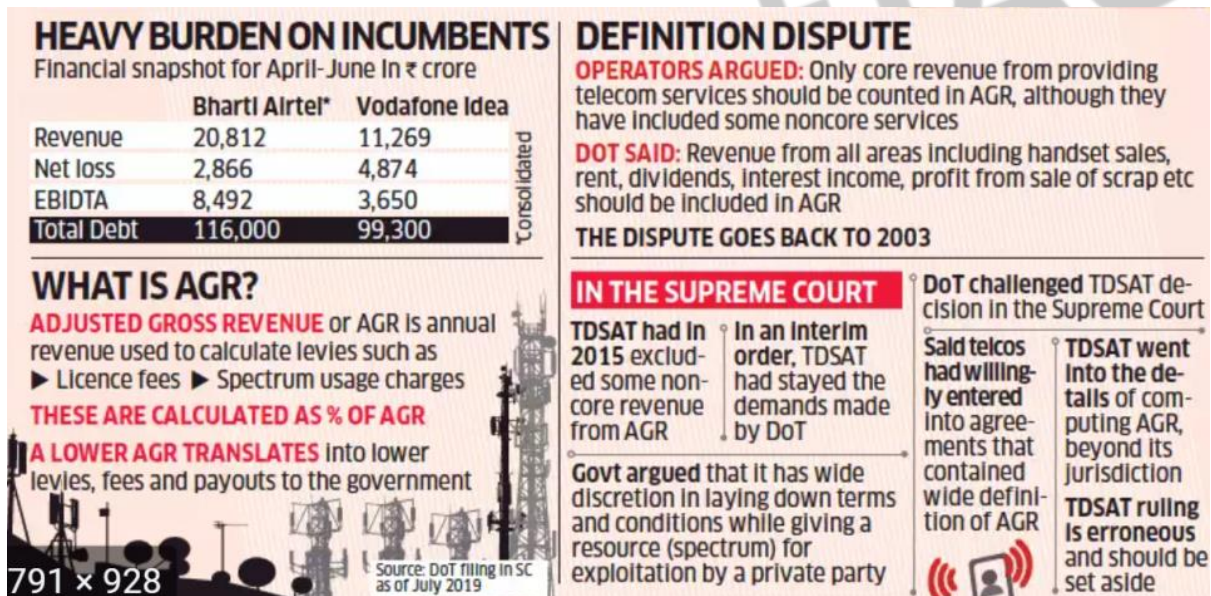
**Q- Discuss in detail the key features of the much awaited Telecom Sector Reforms due to be sanctioned by the government?**

**BACKGROUND** = The Cabinet approved several measures to extend a lifeline to the cash-strapped telecom sector. In all, nine structural reforms and five procedural reforms for the sector were announced –

1. Including a redefinition of the much-litigated concept of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to exclude non-telecom revenue

- **What is AGR?**

There was a regime of heavy interest, penalty and interest on penalty on payment of licence fees, spectrum user charges and all kinds of charges, which has been rationalised, adding that AGR calculations would exclude all non-telecom revenue from now, and penalties had been completely scrapped.



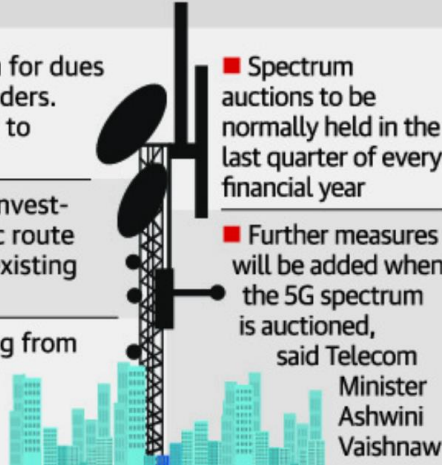
The earlier definition of AGR, backed by the Telecom Department and upheld by the Supreme Court in 2019, had made telcos liable to pay ₹1.6 lakh crore. Last September, the top court granted players 10 years to pay up, starting April 2021

2. A four-year moratorium on players' dues to the government
3. A fixed calendar for spectrum auctions with an extended tenure of 30 years for future spectrum allocations
4. A mechanism to surrender and share spectrum.

5. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector has also been allowed up to 100% under the automatic route, from the existing limit of 49%.
6. Together, these measures would pave the way for largescale investments, including for 5G technology deployment, and generate more jobs.

**Respite for telcos** | A look at some of the relief measures announced by the Union government for telecom companies

- Four-year moratorium for dues of telecom service providers. However, they will have to pay interest
- 100% foreign direct investment through automatic route in the sector, from the existing limit of 49%
- For customers, shifting from prepaid to postpaid and vice-versa will not require fresh KYC
- Spectrum auctions to be normally held in the last quarter of every financial year
- Further measures will be added when the 5G spectrum is auctioned, said Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw



#### Criticism -

- Experts are, however, not sure the package would be enough to keep their troubled joint venture Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) afloat as the moratorium on AGR dues, spectrum dues and interest payments would only provide temporary relief with these deferred dues to be payable eventually with interest. **The tariff regime still needs a reboot for players to sustain operations.** Such as –
  - a. The “continued strong support of the Telecom Minister and the Finance Minister” for VIL to continue to contribute to “India’s digital ambitions”.

#### Benefits -

1. Interest on those dues will now be compounded annually instead of monthly and the Minister said interest would be charged at a ‘reasonable’ rate of MCLR plus 2%. MCLR refers to the lowest lending rate banks are permitted to offer.
2. Rating agency ICRA assessed that the moratorium on AGR dues provides an annual cash flow breather of around ₹14,000 crore for the industry while the moratorium on spectrum dues gives another ₹32,000 crore of annual cash flow relief as a whole.
3. Further, a moratorium of four years gives enough time for industry to carry out fundamental improvements by way of increasing tariffs, which is critical from the industry perspective.
4. These reforms would further boost the firm’s efforts to invest in the digital economy.



**❖ Polity**

**Q- What is the sanctity of the search and selection process if the government has the last word? Elaborate?**

**BACKGROUND** = The Supreme Court accused the Central government of “cherry-picking” names for appointments to tribunals groaning under backlogs and left almost defunct by long-pending vacancies.

**The scenario that went wrong –**

The Bench addressed Attorney General K.K. Venugopal about how the government pulled the rug from underneath the hard work of the search-cum-selection committees, headed by sitting Supreme Court judges, tasked with interviewing and shortlisting suitable candidates for tribunals.

The government picked a few names from the final ‘select’ list prepared by the committee and then moved on to appoint a few others from the ‘wait’ list.

Based on the selection list of National Company Law Tribunal. The selection committee recommended nine judicial members and 10 technical members. The appointment letters indicate cherry-picking of three names from the select list and others from the wait list, ignoring others in the select list. In service law, you cannot go to wait list ignoring the select list.

The CJI retorted, “We are a democratic country working under a rule of law... What is the sanctity of these committees if they cannot guarantee appointments?”

Justice Chandrachud highlighted the case of Debt Recovery Tribunals that had become almost non-functional under the weight of their vacancies. “When a bank decides to recover debt on a house or a factory, the debtor has no remedy. The High Court refuses to hear his case... There is no recourse to justice.”

**Way Forward –**

The CJI said, “If the government does not act in two weeks, we will pass orders.” Problems that persist are -

- The state of tribunals and the thousands of litigants waiting for justice “pitiable”.
- Cases were adjourned for months.
- There was no manpower to form Benches.
- Litigants were made to travel to faraway States where there were at least some tribunal members available to hear cases.
- However, no appointments were made by the government. “We wasted so much time,” he noted.
- In one of the tribunals, the selection committee interviewed 534 candidates for judicial members and another 400 for technical members. A list was given. But the government picked a few from the select list and some others from the wait list.



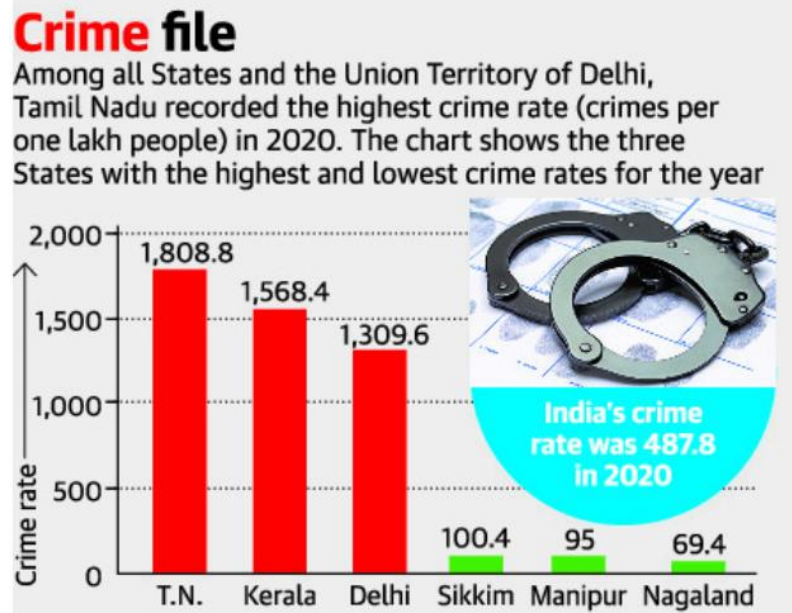
- Chief Justice Ramana referred to how a Supreme Court judge, who headed a selection committee for a tribunal, travelled across the country to conduct interviews for appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### ❖ Governance

**Q- Mention the reason behind the rise in registration of cases under the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)?**

**BACKGROUND** = There was a 28% increase in the registration of cases in 2020 in the country compared to 2019, **primarily owing to the violation of COVID-19 norms** -

1. An almost 21-fold jump was recorded in cases of **disobedience to the order duly promulgated by public servant**, and over four times in cases involving violations of other State local laws.
2. **Crimes against Scheduled Castes**, with a total of 50,291 cases, showed an increase of 9.4%. Simple hurt with 32.9% (16,543) formed the largest chunk, followed by cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act with 8.5% (4,273) and cases under criminal intimidation with 7.5% (3,788).
3. In all, 8,272 cases were instituted for **offences against the Scheduled Tribe communities**: an increase of 9.3% over 2019. Simple hurt (2,247) accounted for 27.2%, followed by rape with 13.7% (1,137) and assault on women with intent to outrage their modesty with 10.7% (885).
4. **The cases of sedition** declined from 93 in 2019 to 73 last year, with Manipur reporting 15, Assam 12, Karnataka eight, Uttar Pradesh seven, Haryana six, Delhi five and Kashmir two.
5. A total of 66,01,285 **cognisable crimes**, comprising more than 42.54 lakh Indian Penal Code (IPC) offences and over 23.46 lakh **Special & Local Laws (SLL) crimes**, were registered in 2020.



### Lockdown -

In 2020, more than 55.84 lakh cases were under investigation and over 34.47 lakh of them were disposed of.. In nearly 26.12 lakh cases, charge sheets were filed, resulting in a charge-sheeting rate of 75.8%, an increase by 12.50% compared to 2019.

### Stats amongst varying types of crimes -

- As the country remained under complete lockdown from March 25 to May 31 last year during the first wave of COVID-19, cases of crime against women, children and senior citizens, theft, burglary, robbery and dacoity declined.
- A total of 10,47,216 cases of offences affecting the human body were registered, which accounted for 24.6% of the total IPC crimes last year. "Hurt" as an offence accounted for maximum cases (55.3%), followed by causing death by negligence (12.1%) and assault on women with intent to outrage their modesty (8.2%).
- Cases of murder showed a marginal increase of 1% to 29,193.
- "Kidnapping and abduction" cases declined by 19.3%. While 14,869 were male, 73,721 were female victims. As per the data, 56,591 were minor and 31,999 adults.
- A total of 91,458 kidnapped or abducted persons (22,872 male and 68,667 female) were found alive and recovered, while 281 persons were found dead.

## Snippets

### ❖ Polity

**Q- Explain how the amendments to the ‘Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act’ are a violation to the “basic structure of the Constitution”?**

- The Delhi government has moved the Supreme Court seeking the quashing of four amended sections of the ‘Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act’ and 13 Rules of the ‘Transaction of Business of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Rules, 1993’.

## Centre vs Delhi govt again

### WHAT THE BILL PROPOSES

- The term “Government” in any law by the legislative assembly will mean “Lieutenant Governor”
- The assembly shall not make rules or committees to consider day-to-day administration or conduct inquiries
- Rule or committee made before the new amendment comes into force “shall be void”
- Before taking any executive action, opinion of the L-G shall be obtained by a general or special order
- L-G shall have power to reserve for consideration any bill, and any of the matters outside the purview of the powers conferred on the legislative assembly



**Bill will define responsibilities in line with the constitutional scheme of governance of national Capital, as interpreted by SC**  
— AMIT SHAH, UNION HOME MINISTER

### DELHI GOVT'S RESERVATIONS

- Article 239AA says legislature can make laws on any matters on state and concurrent list except for issues relating to public order, police and land.
- SC's Constitution bench in 2018 recognised assembly's right, and said Union has exclusive powers only in the above 3 issues.
- SC said L-G should work with aid and advice of council of ministers
- SC order clarified that L-G has not been entrusted with any independent decision-making power
- While any matter of dispute can be sent to President, the SC said it does not mean every matter should be

**After being rejected by people of Delhi, BJP seeks to drastically curtail powers of elected govt. Bill is dilution of SC judgment.**  
— ARVIND KEJRIWAL, CM



- On March 15 this year, the Centre introduced the GNCTD Act Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha, which later received the assent of the President. In July, the Transaction of Business of Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act came into force.
- The Delhi government has contended that the amended Act violates the “basic structure of the Constitution” and that the Centre, through the amendments, has given more power

to the Lieutenant-Governor than the elected government of Delhi. Treating the L-G as the “default administering authority” over Delhi.

- In the petition, the Delhi government has challenged the constitutionality of Sections 21, 24, 33, 44 of the GNCTD Act, 1991 and Rules 3, 6A, 10, 14, 15, 19, 22, 23, 25, 47A, 49, 52 and 57 of Transaction of Business of the GNCTD Rules, 1993.

#### ❖ Polity

#### Q- What does the SC statement mean “Quarrel is not abetting suicide”?

- The Supreme Court has held that a person cannot be held guilty of abetting suicide merely because he or she quarrelled with the victim that day.
- Active instigation is an essential ingredient under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) under the Indian Penal Code.
- “Abetment by a person is when a person instigates another to do something. Instigation can be inferred where the accused had, by his acts or omission, created such circumstances that the deceased was left with no other option except to commit suicide.”
- **The Case -**
- The case concerns a woman who quarrelled with her husband and committed suicide hours later. The man too tried to poison himself after the fight, but survived.
- “The allegation against the appellant [husband] is that there was a quarrel on the day of occurrence. There is no other material on record which indicates abetment. There is no material on record that the appellant-accused played an active role by an act of instigating the deceased to facilitate the commission of suicide. On the contrary, in the present case, the appellant-accused also tried to commit suicide and consumed pesticide.

#### ❖ International Relations

#### Q- Shed some light on the new trilateral partnership – AUKUS and its vision plan?

- US a week before QUAD announced a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific between Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. (AUKUS).
- A central feature of the partnership would involve an 18-month effort to help –
  1. **Australia acquire nuclear-powered submarines** which are quieter, more capable (than their conventional counterparts) and can be deployed for longer periods, needing to surface less frequently.

2. The partnership would also involve a **new architecture of meetings and engagements between the three countries** and also cooperation across emerging technologies (applied AI, quantum technologies and undersea capabilities).
3. Australia has **felt increasing pressure from an assertive China**, like other countries in the region, and has sought to strengthen its partnerships with India, the U.S. and the U.K., including through 'plurilateral' forums.
4. Upholding the international rules-based order, and promoting peace and stability in the Indo- Pacific.



**Q- Sansad TV vouched as the 'Voice of the House' is a new channel of?**

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Lok Sabha                 | b) Rajya Sabha              |
| c) Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha | d) Prime Ministerial Office |



**Q- Consider the following statements as to what would India-Singapore's UPI-PayNow linkage mean?**

1. Will enable users of each of the two fast-payment systems to make instant, low-cost fund transfers on a reciprocal basis without a need to get onboarded onto the other payment system.
2. These platforms enable virtual payment address created by the customer for peer-to-peer fund-transfer service.

**Select the correct answer using the code below –**

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| a) 1 only | b) 2 only  |
| c) Both   | d) Neither |

**Ans – c**

NOTE: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) on Tuesday announced a project to link their respective fast payment systems — Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and PayNow — to facilitate instant, low-cost, cross-border fund transfers.

The linkage is targeted to be operationalised by July 2022.

"The UPI-PayNow linkage will enable users of each of the two fast-payment systems to make instant, low-cost fund transfers on a reciprocal basis without a need to get onboarded onto the other payment system," the RBI said in a statement.

UPI is India's mobile-based, 'fast-payment' system that facilitates customers to make round-the-clock payments instantly using a virtual payment address created by the customer.

PayNow is the fast payment system of Singapore that enables peer-to-peer fund-transfer service.

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