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DAILY NEWS DIARY

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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

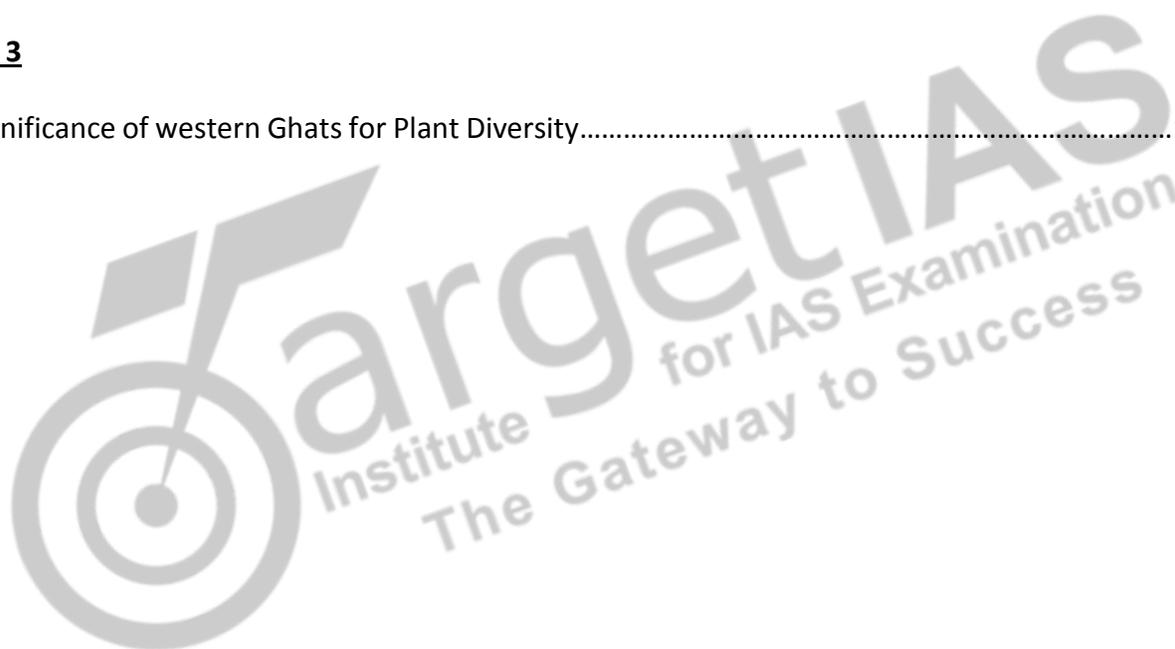
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ESSAY PAPER

Editorial

Q- The temporary rollback of tax hikes on textiles is a harbinger of challenges before GST regime. Explain?

INTRODUCTION = On New Year's eve, nine hours before a new GST rate of 12% was to kick in for readymade garments and fabrics, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the plan is off and the existing 5% rate will continue into 2022, or at least for its first quarter. **The decision to increase was made to correct the anomaly of an inverted duty structure.**

- While the GST rate on manmade fibre is 18%
- And yarn made from the same is taxed at 12%
- The rate on the final fabric was 5

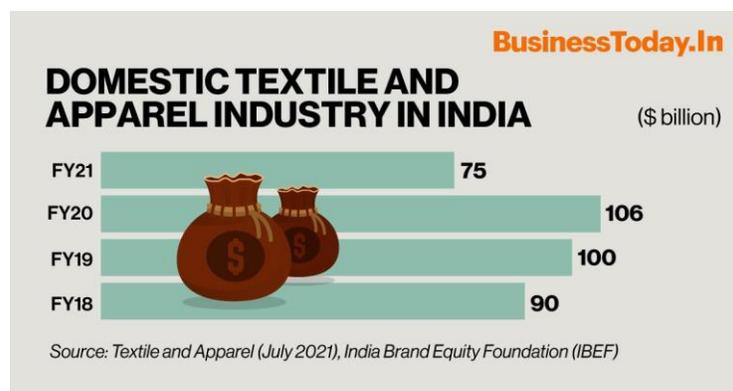
GST levy on textiles	
Silk and jute	0%
Cotton and natural fibre	5%
Manmade fibre	18%
All categories of yarn	5%
Manmade yarn	18%
Fabrics, irrespective of fibre	5%
Apparels priced above Rs 1,000	12%
Apparels priced below Rs 1,000	5%

Ostensibly creating a headache for textile producers which the Council had sought to alleviate.

The move to raise that rate to 12%, along with that on footwear costing less than ₹1,000 a pair, had been on the Council's agenda for over a year but had been kept on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic's adverse effects on households. **Explaining the rethink to hold off the rate hikes was arrived at after several parleys that explored, among other things, the likely impact on consumers.**

India's Textile Industry -

Although the rate hike was aimed at helping producers get easier credit for taxes paid on inputs, that is not how it was seen by several players in an industry that has historically been one of India's largest employment creators and contributes around 2% to the overall economy.



Last month, many lathes in the textile industry were left idling for a day, in what may be the first ever strike that has not been triggered by industrial unrest in the sector that last witnessed debilitating strikes from labour unions in the 1980s.

Those protests, along with some States' missives to the Centre, warning of significant factory closures and job losses, had failed to move the needle and the industry had resigned itself to the new rates.

The course correction needs to be navigated more deftly and with greater purpose, if India hopes to revive private investments.

GS 2

❖ Polity

Q- Is ₹8 lakh income a 'reasonable' cap for EWS quota?

BACKGROUND = A government committee report in the Supreme Court has said that "income" is a "feasible criterion" for defining the "Economically Weaker Sections" (EWS) in society, and the annual family income of ₹8 lakh is a "reasonable" threshold to determine EWS in order to extend reservation in admissions and jobs.

- The report is the result of the Supreme Court's repeated grilling of the government, since October, to explain how it zeroed in on the figure of '₹8 lakh' as the annual income criterion to identify EWS among forward classes of society for grant of 10% reservation in National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) medical admissions under the All India Quota (AIQ) category.
- The court was hearing a batch of petitions filed by NEET aspirants challenging a July 29 notification of the Centre announcing 27% quota to OBCs and 10% reservation to EWS in AIQ.
- The Supreme Court's query was significant as the One Hundred and Third Constitutional Amendment of 2019, which introduced the 10% EWS quota

Has the Union government had “mechanically adopted” ₹8 lakh as a number because it was also used for the OBC creamy layer cut-off?

Not Really -

1. First, EWS's criteria relates to the financial year prior to the year of application whereas the income criterion for the creamy layer in OBC category is applicable to gross annual income for three consecutive years.
2. Secondly, in case of OBC creamy layer, income from salaries, agriculture and traditional artisanal professions are excluded from the consideration whereas the ₹8 lakh criteria for EWS includes all sources, including farming. So, despite being the same cut-off number, their composition is different and hence, the two cannot be equated.

Panel's prescription

A look at some of the recommendations of the committee

- The current gross annual family income limit of ₹8 lakh or less for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) may be retained

- EWS may exclude, irrespective of income, a person whose family has 5 acres of agricultural land and above

- The residential asset criteria may altogether be removed

- Sudden adoption of a new criteria in the committee report would delay and have a cascading effect on admissions, exams, etc. Existing system followed from 2019 may be continued this year as well



It found no fault in the uniform application of the ₹8-lakh criteria across the country. The figure ensures that most low-income people who are not required to pay income tax are not excluded and are covered in EWS and at the same time it should not be so high that it becomes over-inclusive by including many income tax-paying middle-and high-income families into EWS.

❖ Governance

Q- Analyse and comment on the fate of Census since the Pandemic struck India?

BACKGROUND =The RGI informed the States in July 2020 that after the outbreak of the pandemic, the field work of the first phase of Census 2021 and the other related activities had been postponed until further orders.

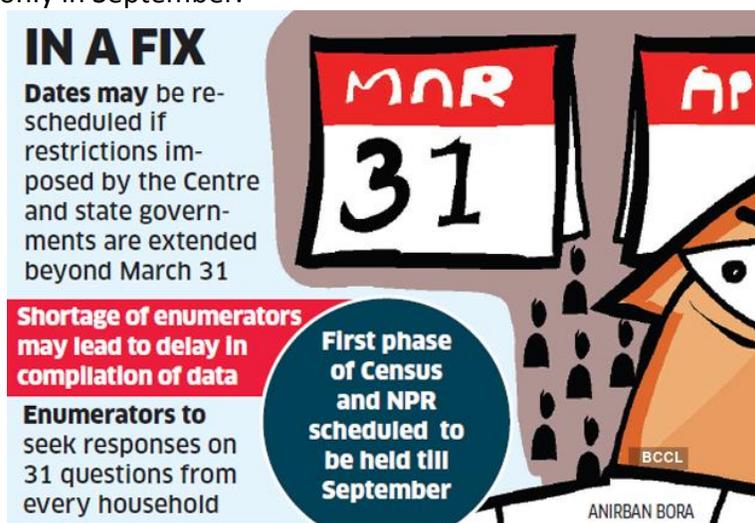
“Subsequent to the postponement of census activities, requests were received from several State/Union Territory governments seeking clarifications/permission for creation/extension/up-gradation of different administrative units. Hence, it was decided to extend the date of freezing of boundaries up to December 31, 2020. It said if any changes in the administrative boundaries are to be made, it may be effected latest by December 31, 2020.

However, it was extended again till December 31,2021. The fresh date is June 30, 2022.

Current Situation –

The first phase of census and the collection of details to update the National Population Register (NPR) have been postponed at least till September.

- The Registrar-General of India (RGI) had in December informed the States that **the freezing of boundaries of districts, sub-districts, tehsils, talukas and police stations had been postponed till June 2022.**
- **Freezing of boundary limits of administrative units, at least three months prior to the exercise, is a pre-requisite for conducting the census.**
- Even if the RGI issues an order in June to freeze the boundaries again, the exercise can take place only in September.



1. The first phase of Census 2021 — the Houselisting and Housing Census along with updating the NPR — was scheduled to be held between April and September 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic.
2. The second and main phase of the decennial exercise — the population enumeration — was to be concluded by March 5, 2021.
- 3.

Taking the dynamics into account -

- The number of districts has gone up from 640 in 2011 to 736.
- The sub-districts are up from 5,925 to 6,754, statutory towns from 4,041 to 4,657, census towns from 3,892 to 5,050, but villages have decreased from 6,40,934 in 2011 to 6,39,083 in 2021.
- For Census 2021, all the changes between January 1, 2010 i.e. after the date of freezing of boundaries for Census 2011 up to the date of freezing of boundaries for forthcoming exercise (presently up to June 30, 2022) are to be considered for finalising the administrative units.

The preparation of an unambiguous list of administrative units is termed as “Census Frame” covering the entire area but without omission or duplication of any administrative unit at any level.

❖ Governance

Q- Discuss the contents of the Draft National Policy for Air Sports 2022?

BACKGROUND = The government released a draft national policy for air sports in the country that will require –

1. Entities providing these services and their equipment to be registered, as well as be liable for penalties.
2. The policy proposes a two-tier governance structure for air sports in the country, which will include an apex governing body called the Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) and associations for each air sport.
3. It will cover activities like aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding, hang gliding, paragliding, microlighting, paramotoring, skydiving, and vintage aircraft.



4. The ASFI will be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and will represent India at the Lausanne-headquartered Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) and other global platforms related to air sports. It will provide governance over various aspects of air sports, including regulation, certification, competitions, awards and penalties.
5. Each air sports association will lay down its safety standards for equipment, infrastructure, personnel and training, and specify the disciplinary actions to be taken in case of non-compliance. Inability to do so may lead to penal action by the ASFI.

6. All persons and entities providing air sports services will be required to register as members of the respective air sports associations. Key equipment used will also have to be registered.
7. It is proposed that popular air sports attractions in the country such as Bir Billing in Himachal Pradesh, Gangtok in Sikkim, Hadapsar in Maharashtra and Vagamon in Kerala can be declared as a “control zone” for air sports in order to ensure the safety of other manned aircraft.
8. Schools and colleges will be encouraged to include air sports in their curriculum and their students will have the opportunity to participate in the FAI’s international competitions.
9. The draft policy also aims to promote domestic design, development and manufacturing of air sports equipment under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan; waive import duty on equipment for a few years; as well as request the GST Council to consider rationalising the GST rate on air sports equipment to 5% or less.

Snippets

❖ Governance

Q- Why is it that Telangana stood as a model state for the country in implementing the Open Defecation Free Scheme?

- Once again, Telangana stood first in the country in the list of highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme till December 31, 2021.
- As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are in the ODF Plus list, which is 96.74%. Tamil Nadu followed with 4,432 villages (35.39%) and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%). Gujarat took the 17th position with only 83 villages (0.45%).
- The Telangana government has enacted a **new Telangana Panchayat Raj Act to ensure holistic development of villages.**
 1. A secretary has been posted in every panchayat for smooth execution of welfare programmes, close monitoring, digital reporting and to ensure prevalence of good governance in villages.
 2. The government has stressed on garbage collection and scientific disposal.
 3. Garbage bins have been distributed to all households
 4. The implementation of **Palle Pragathi programme** for holistic development of villages is being uploaded on SBM (G) 2.0 mobile app, which gets reported at the national level dashboard.
 5. Telangana State, as per the SBM (Grameen) phase-II dashboard, became numero uno in India by declaring the highest number of ODF villages.

GS 3**❖ Environment**

Q- Comment on the significance of western Ghats for Plant Diversity?

BACKGROUND = Two new plant species were reported from the biodiversity-rich Western Ghats regions in Thiruvananthapuram and Wayanad districts of Kerala.

They have been christened *Fimbristylis sunilii* and *Neanotis prabhuii*, and the findings by the research teams have been detailed in the plant taxonomy journal *Phytotaxa*.



Fimbristylis sunilii and *Neanotis prabhuii*



Collected from the grasslands of Ponmudi hills, Thiruvananthapuram, *Fimbristylis sunilii* has been named after plant taxonomist C.N. Sunil, retired professor and research guide of Botany, SNM College.

Significance -

1. A perennial plant of the Cyperaceae family, it stands 20-59 cm tall and was collected from an elevation of 1,100 metres.
2. *Fimbristylis sunilii* has been provisionally assessed as data deficient (DD) under the IUCN Red List categories.
3. *Neanotis prabhuii* is a prostrate perennial herb named after K.M. Prabhukumar, Senior Scientist at CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow, in recognition of his research on flowering plants of the Western Ghats. Discovered in the Chembra Peak grasslands of Wayanad, it hails from the family Rubiaceae and grows on high-altitude grasslands.
4. *Neanotis prabhuii* grows up to 70 cm in length and is many-flowered with the petals pale pink in colour.

The Western Ghats are one of the world's biodiversity hotspots with **over 5,000 flowering plants**, 139 mammals, 508 birds and 179 amphibian species. At least 325 globally threatened species occur here. The range covers 60,000km² and forms the catchment area for a complex of river systems that drain almost 40% of India.





Q- Consider the following:

- 1) Birds 2) Dust blowing
3) Rain 4) Wind blowing

Which of the above spread plant diseases?

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



Q- Which of the following statements are true regarding Lord Ripon?

- 1) He commenced industrial legislation by passing the first Factories Act.
2) He passed the Local Self Government act in 1882.
3) He raised the age for the entry in civil services to 23 years.

- a) Only 2 b) 1 and 2
c) 2 and 3 d) None of the above

Answer: b

Lord Rippon 1880-1884 Age for the entry in Civil Service exam was raised to 21 years. First Factory act was passed during his time in 1881, it prohibited the child labour. Illbert Bill in 1883 was passed by him. Passed Local Self Government act in 1882.

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