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## DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

**24.01.2022**

## 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  
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ECONOMIC TIMES - ET  
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI



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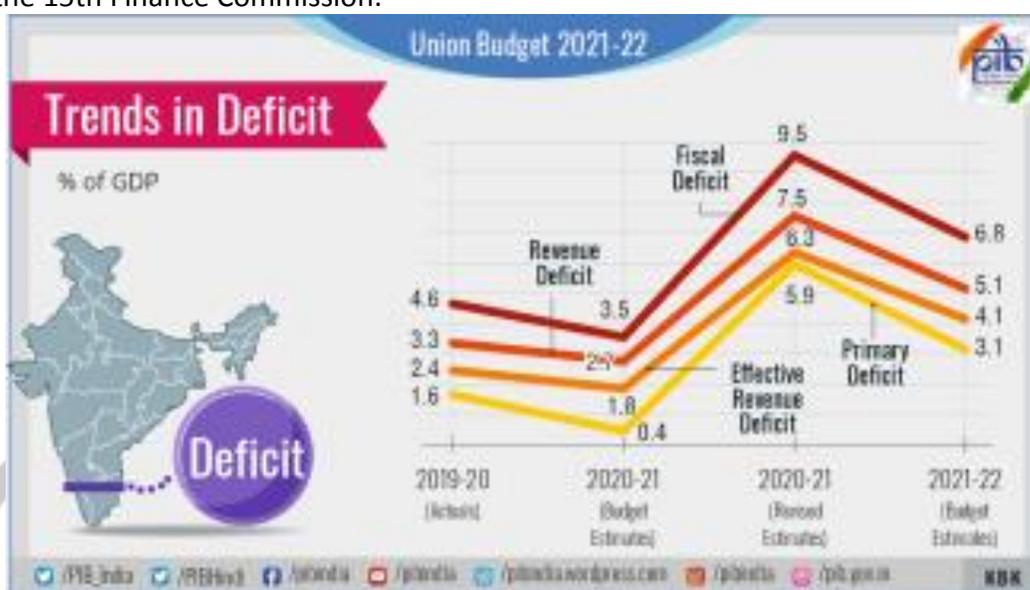
## ESSAY PAPER

### Editorial

**Q- Discuss the Government of India's Fiscal Arithmetic for the upcoming financial year?**

**INTRODUCTION** = Early next week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union budget.

- **The last budget** had presented a roadmap for fiscal consolidation, projecting to **bring down the fiscal deficit** from 9.5 per cent of GDP in 2020-21 to 6.8 per cent in 2021-22, and thereafter, to below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. This trajectory broadly mirrors the path laid out by the 15th Finance Commission.



#### **Challenges in bringing down the FD -**

But, even though the Centre's tax collections have grown at a fairly robust pace and nominal GDP growth this year is expected to surpass what was factored in the budget numbers, meeting the 6.8 per cent target for this year might be challenging –

1. with **proceeds from disinvestment likely to fall way short of expectations**, and considering the government's additional expenditure outlays.
2. At the aggregate level, the Centre's gross tax collections in the first eight months of the year (April to November) have already touched Rs 15.4 lakh crore. The disaggregated data shows that both direct and indirect tax collections have been fairly buoyant. The trends so far suggest that tax collections are likely to exceed the budgeted target by a significant margin. However, it is difficult to arrive at firm estimates due to the economic **uncertainty stemming from the third wave of the pandemic**.
3. A major area of concern is the **disinvestment target**. As against a target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore, collections have so far only touched Rs 9,330 crore. But this shortfall is not a one-off. Last year too, the government was able to mop up only Rs 32,000 crore against a budget target of Rs 2.1 lakh crore. This trend of proceeds falling well short of ambitious targets is because

disinvestment continues to be treated only as a means to shore up revenues to meet the fiscal deficit target, and not as part of a concerted effort to get the government out of business, and improve the efficiency of companies.

4. On the other hand, **government spending does not appear to have maintained a steady pace**. Spending has so far remained subdued in the third quarter, with total expenditure clocking only a 5 per cent growth, down from 21 per cent in the previous quarter. Spending though may pick up in the months ahead on the food and fertiliser subsidy, export incentives, and other items as detailed in the supplementary demand for grants.
5. However, despite the criticality of public sector investments at this juncture, in eight months so far the government has spent just under half its full year budgeted capex. Considering that the economy is being driven by the engines of exports and government spending — private consumption and investments continue to remain muted — if government spending itself remains subdued, it will impact the economy's growth prospects.

## GS 2

### ❖ International Relations

Q- What caused the Environmental Emergency in South America's Peru?

**INTRODUCTION** = Peru declared an environmental emergency to battle an oil spill caused by freak waves from a volcanic eruption in the South Pacific.



- The stunningly powerful eruption of an undersea volcano near Tonga unleashed tsunami waves around the Pacific and as far away as the United States.
- In Peru, the oil spill near Lima has fouled beaches, killed birds and harmed the fishing and tourism industries.

### **Retaliatory Measures -**

With its 90-day decree, the government said it plans “sustainable management” of 21 beaches tarred by 6,000 barrels of oil that spilled from a tanker ship unloading at a refinery last Saturday.

1. One aim of the decree is to better organise the various agencies and teams working in the aftermath of the disaster.
2. The government is demanding payment of damages from the Spanish energy giant Repsol which owns the refinery.
3. The environment ministry said 174 hectares — equivalent to 270 football fields — of sea, beaches and natural reserves were affected by the spill. Crews have been working for days to clean up the spill.

Peruvian Government issued the emergency decree because the crude still in the water was still spreading, reaching 40 kilometers from the spot of the original spill. And such a sudden event will have a significant impact on the coastal marine ecosystem.

## **GS 3**

### **❖ Environment**

#### **Q- What is the T.S.R Subramanian committee report on environment?**

**BACKGROUND** = The Subramanian committee was set up in August 2014 to review the country’s green laws and the procedures followed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). It suggested several amendments to align with the Government’s economic development agenda. The report submitted to then Union environment minister, Prakash Javadekar had suggested amendments to almost all green laws, including those relating to environment, forest, wildlife and coastal zone clearances. The committee had three months to submit its report. After it did, a Parliamentary Standing Committee rejected the report on the grounds that it ended up diluting key aspects of environmental legislation designed to protect the environment. The committee suggested that another committee, with more expertise and time, be constituted to review the environmental laws.



## Easing Green Hurdles

A committee headed by TSR Subramanian has been formed to review environment-related laws & statutes. It has to recommend amendments within two months to ensure these laws meet their aims

### WHAT WILL THE COMMITTEE DO?

- **Committee will look into five laws:** Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 & Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981

**It will consider the constitution of an independent environmental regulator**

- **Address the** issue related to increasing penalties for violations of environmental laws

### TAKING CUE FROM COURT ORDERS

- **The environment** ministry has told panel to reflect the various judicial pronouncements to amend laws
- **It will** review the Supreme Court order in the Godavarman case – the July 2011 judgment on the LaFarge Umium Mining Case
- **In LaFarge** Umium Mining Case, the SC had asked govt to set up an independent environment regulator for appraising projects
- **Regulator was** supposed to enforce environmental conditions for approvals & impose penalties on polluters

**What did the T.S.R report recommend?**

1. The report proposed an 'Environmental Laws (Management) Act' (ELMA), that envisioned full-time expert bodies—National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and State Environmental Management Authority (SEMA)—to be constituted at the Central and State levels respectively to evaluate project clearance (using technology and expertise), in a time bound manner, providing for single-window clearance.
2. To accelerate the environmental decision-making process, they suggested a “fast track” procedure for “linear” projects (roads, railways and transmission lines), power and mining projects and for “projects of national importance.”
3. The Air Act and the Water Act is to be subsumed within the Environment Protection Act.
4. The existing Central Pollution Control Board and the State Pollution Control Boards, which monitor and regulate the conditions imposed on the industries to safeguard environment, are proposed to be integrated into NEMA and SEMA once the new bodies come into existence.
5. It also suggested an appellate mechanism against the decisions of NEMA/SEMA or MoEF&CC, in respect of project clearance, prescribing a three-month deadline to dispose appeals.
6. The report also recommends that an “environmental reconstruction cost” should be assessed for each project on the basis of the damage caused by it to the environment and this should be added into the cost of the project. This cost has to be recovered as a cess or duty from the project proponent during the life of the project. At the tail end, it proposed a National Environment Research institute “on the lines of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education” to bring in the application of high-end technology in environment governance and finally, an Indian Environment Service to recruit qualified and skilled human resource in the environment sector.

**Has the report been accepted by the Government?**

The Centre never formally accepted this report and neither constituted a new committee as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee. However, many of these recommendations are implicitly making their way into the process of environmental regulation. The Government has proposed rewrites to the Forest Conservation laws, set timelines to the pace at which expert committees that appraise the suitability of infrastructure projects must proceed, as well as sought to make existing laws consonant with court judgements.

## ❖ Biodiversity

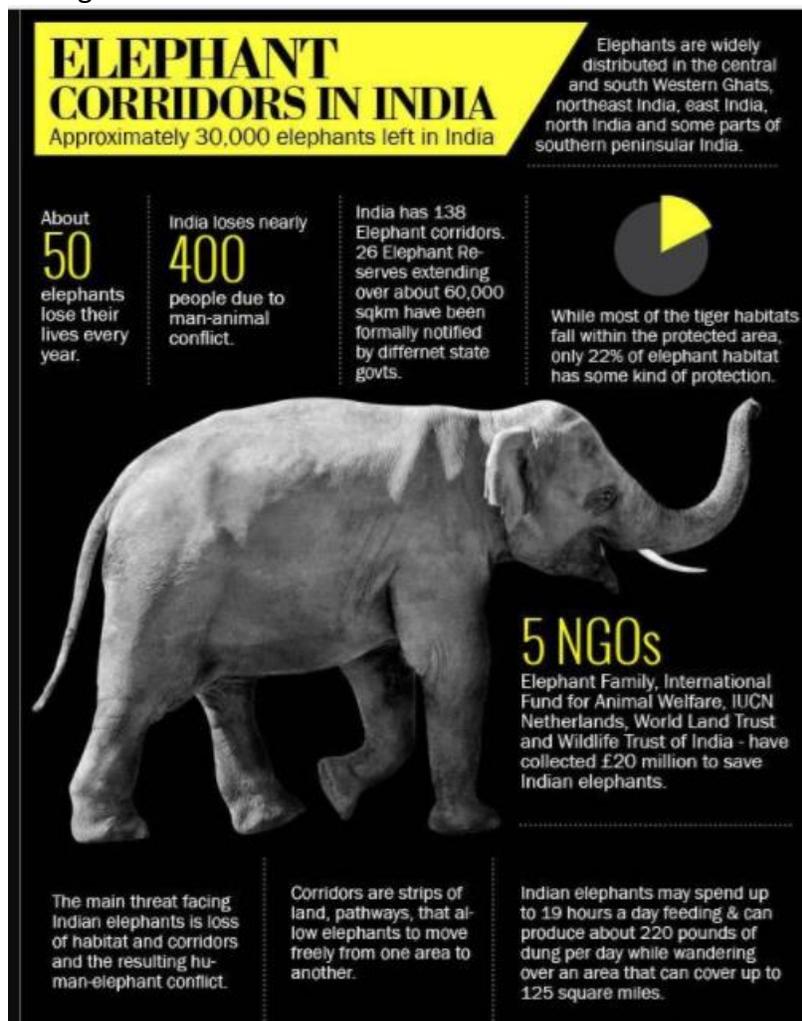
### Q- How is the Human-Animal conflict in elephant corridors of South Bengal contained?

**BACKGROUND** = The fragmented and patchy forests of south Bengal have emerged as one of the hotspots of human-elephant conflict in the country, resulting in loss of lives of both humans and pachyderms.

At times, the conflict results in law and order problems.

- In November 2021, a herd of 50 elephants came within 5 km of east Burdwan town, prompting the district administration to impose prohibitory orders in several gram panchayats in the region.
- Between 2014 and 2019, as many as 2,381 human deaths were recorded in elephant attacks across the country, of which 403 (over 16%) were reported from West Bengal.
- The State, however, is home to less than 3% of the elephant population and records a high death count of pachyderms in conflicts.

Minimising elephant-human conflict is the pressing need of the region and wildlife organisations and experts have now taken up the task of undertaking ecological restoration of elephant corridors in south Bengal.



The degradation started not just with increased agricultural activities in the region but also participatory joint forest management such as community forestry, which changed the very nature of the forest to make it commercially viable, not considering the biodiversity of the region. It is also aimed at creating a balanced ecosystem so that humans and animals can coexist in consonance with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

There are 180 to 200 elephants in the region, but due to fragmentation of forests these herds are no longer following traditional migration. This is the reason that sometimes we see elephants entering towns in Burdwan, Bankura and Medinipur.



**Q- In the context of Indian history, the term Macaulay's Minutes is related to:**

- a) Consolidating and amending the law relating to arms and ammunition.
- b) Promoting English education in India.
- c) Control and regulate the vernacular press in India.
- d) Promotion of oriental learning in India.



**Q- He emphasised that although the Indian students should remain connected to their own roots, they should also take the fullest advantage of learning modern scientific discoveries and Western experiments and education. He started two weeklies viz. the Karmayogin in English and the Dharma in Bengali. He was:**

- a. Aurobindo Ghose
- b. Subhash Chandra Bose
- c. Surendranath Banerjea
- d. Rabindranath Tagore

**Answer: a**

Aurobindo Ghose emphasised that although the Indian students should remain connected to their own roots, they should also take the fullest advantage of learning modern scientific discoveries, western experiments, education and language. He started two weeklies viz. the Karmayogin in English and the Dharma in Bengali. Hence, option (a) is correct.

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