

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

20 New companies bought poll bonds, a punishable offence

CONTEXT: The Congress on Wednesday cited a media report which claimed that at least 20 newly incorporated firms purchased electoral bonds worth about Rs 103 crore, as it alleged that the Narendra Modi government's scheme deliberately "muddied the waters" of corporate political donations.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh cited a report by The Hindu, which said that despite companies in existence for less than three years not being allowed to make political contributions, data shows that at least 20 such newly incorporated firms purchased poll bonds worth about Rs 103 crore.

Despite companies in existence for less than three years not being allowed to make political contributions — even through the electoral bonds route — data shows that at least 20 such newly incorporated firms purchased poll bonds worth about ₹103 crore

At the time when they purchased their first electoral bonds, five of these firms were in existence for less than a year, seven of them were a year old and the eight others had only completed two years. Notably, many of these firms were started in 2019 when the Indian economy went through recession or during the middle of the pandemic and bought electoral bonds worth crores of rupees just months after incorporation.

The ban on companies making political contributions within three years from incorporation has been in existence for nearly four decades. In 1985, the Parliament amended Section 293A, lifting the ban on political contributions by firms subject to a few conditions. One of the conditions was that the firms should not be owned by the government and should not be less than three years old. This clause was retained under Section 182 of the Companies Act, 2013. When Section 154 of the Finance Act, 2017, amended Section 182, just before the introduction of electoral bonds, this clause was again retained. However, the amendment deleted the first proviso by which the amount donated by a company was capped at 7.5% of its average net profit during its previous three financial years. The prohibition on companies making donations to political parties in their first three years continued. According to Section 182 of the Companies Act 2013, if a firm makes a donation in contravention to the provisions, "the company shall be punishable with fine which may extend to five times the amount so contributed and every officer of the company who is in default shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and with fine which may extend to five times the amount so contributed".

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Israeli proposal for truce not meeting demands: Hamas

CONTEXT: Hamas, on April 9, said Israel's proposal that it received from Qatari and Egyptian mediators did not meet any of the demands of Palestinian factions. However, the group added in a statement it would study the proposal, which it described as "intransigent", and deliver its response to the mediators.

Hamas wants any agreement to secure an end to Israeli military offensive, get Israeli forces out of Gaza and allow the displaced to return to their homes across the enclave.

Rafah is the last refuge for Palestinian civilians displaced by relentless Israeli bombardments that have flattened their home neighbourhoods. It is also the last significant redoubt of Hamas combat units, Israel says. More than one million people are crammed into the southern city in desperate conditions, short of food, water and shelter, and foreign governments and organisations have urged Israel against storming Rafah for fears of a bloodbath.

About Hamas

Hamas is a Palestinian political armed group that was founded in 1987. It's a militant group that emerged as a resistance movement against Israeli occupation.

Hamas was created in 1987 as an offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood seeking to fulfill its agenda through violent jihad.

It gained popularity as a resistance movement against Israeli occupation and Fatah. The United States has designated Hamas a terror organization since 1997. Many other countries, including Israel and most of Europe, see it the same way.

Hamas believes that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded. Hamas rejects any alternative to the complete liberation of Palestine.

CRACKING
CIVIL SERVICES
NO MORE A
DIFFICULT TASK
COME JOIN WITH US

 **VEDHIK**
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra



"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." - Robert Frost

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

Slowdown ahead; political, demographic risks could disrupt India's social stability

CONTEXT: India's economy is likely not doing as well as recent GDP numbers indicate, and a growth slowdown is likely in the coming quarters as consumption demand gets cramped by household savings at near all-time lows, global country risk research company BMI said on Tuesday.

About Recession/Slowdown

Recession is a slowdown or a massive contraction in economic activities. A significant fall in spending generally leads to a recession.

Description: Such a slowdown in economic activities may last for some quarters thereby completely hampering the growth of an economy. In such a situation, economic indicators such as GDP, corporate profits, employments, etc., fall.

This creates a mess in the entire economy. To tackle the menace, economies generally react by loosening their monetary policies by infusing more money into the system, i.e., by increasing the money supply.

This is done by reducing the interest rates. Increased spending by the government and decreased taxation are also considered good answers for this problem. The recession which hit the globe in 2008 is the most recent example of a recession.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

States, UTs asked to submit data on heatstroke cases

CONTEXT: States and Union Territories are to submit data on heat stroke cases and deaths, emergency attendance and total deaths on the Integrated Health Information Portal (IHIP) while undertaking an investigation of suspected heat-related illness/death, said an advisory issued by the National Centre for Disease Control for State Health Department on Heat Wave Season 2024.

About Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a life-threatening condition in which the body overheats when it can no longer maintain a healthy temperature.

Heatstroke occurs when a person's body temperature rises from about 37°C to above 40.5°C. It is sometimes called hyperthermia (not hypothermia, which occurs when the body's temperature drops significantly due to prolonged exposure to extreme cold).

Heatstroke needs immediate first aid to lower the body temperature as quickly as possible. Dehydration and heat exhaustion are milder types of heat-related illnesses.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

India is falling in efforts to control Tuberculosis

With less than two years left to achieve the ambitious goal set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018 to "eliminate" TB in India, the pharmacy of the Global South is once again struggling to treat patients with drug-sensitive TB. Shockingly, India is experiencing a TB drug shortage, with increasing frequency. Just seven months ago, there was an acute shortage of critical MDR-TB drugs; disruptions in drug supply, which began with drug-sensitive medicines in 2022 and snowballed to include MDR-TB drugs, lasted for nearly a year.

Similarly, in September 2021, India faced a stockout of MDR-TB drug Delamanid. Delay in diagnosis and treatment initiation are already a huge concern in the TB care cascade. Patients who start therapy but fail to achieve treatment success is another gap. However, addressing this gap, which takes drug availability for granted, will become harder if drug stock outs become a recurring issue.

About Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

It commonly affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body. It is a treatable and curable disease.

Transmission: TB is spread from person to person through the air. When people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air.

Symptoms: Common symptoms of active lung TB are cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever and night sweats.

Vaccine: Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) is a vaccine for TB disease.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

Surge in steel imports a warning for Atmanirbhar mission

CONTEXT: The Indian steel industry has expressed concern over India becoming a net importer of steel in 2023-24, saying it is a "warning signal" for the country which strives to become Atmanirbhar.

As per the steel ministry's Joint Plant Committee, India has registered a 38 per cent surge in imports of finished steel to 8.319 million tonnes (MnT) over 6.022 MnT imported during the preceding 2022-23 fiscal.

"The surge in predatory imports from China is a big threat to the Atmanirbharta in steel. The country becoming net importer is a warning signal to our march towards Atmanirbharta (self-reliance)," Alok Sahay, secretary general of apex industry body Indian Steel Association (ISA) said.

About Atmanirbhar Bharat

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan or Self-reliant India campaign is the vision of new India. In the year 2020, Prime Minister raised a clarion call to the nation giving a kick start to the Atmanirbhar Bharat

Abhiyaan (Self-reliant India campaign) and announced the Special economic and comprehensive package of INR 20 lakh crores - equivalent to 10% of India's GDP.

The aim is to make the country and its citizens independent and self-reliant in all senses. Five pillars of Atma Nirbhar Bharat – Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand have been outlined.

It aims towards cutting down import dependence by focussing on substitution while improving safety compliance and quality goods to gain global market share.

The Self-Reliance signifies neither any exclusionary or isolationist strategies but involves creation of a helping hand to the whole world.

The Mission focuses on the importance of promoting "local" products.



**MASTER
THE NEW
LEARNING
MANTRA**

www.vedhikiasacademy.org

GEOGRAPHY

India likely to record normal monsoons this year

CONTEXT: The monsoon is likely to be 103% of the long period average (LPA) this year. The LPA refers to the average all-India monsoon rainfall of 88 cm, which is a 50-year mean. The odds of an El Niño, characterised by a heating of the equatorial central Pacific over half a degree, are low this year. Currently, the Pacific is in a [converse] La Niña mode. The plains of North India, along with a few parts of northeast India, are at risk of being rain deficient through the season. The Indian Ocean Dipole, characterised by a temperature gradient in the western and eastern Indian Ocean, is expected to be slightly on the negative. A positive dipole usually aids the monsoon. The monsoon in 2019 and 2020 was only the third time in a century of back-to-back years of above normal rainfall (rainfall that is 5% above normal, or 105%) during the season in India.

About Indian Ocean Dipole

- IOD is the difference between the temperature of eastern (Bay of Bengal) and the western Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea).
- This temperature difference results into pressure difference which results in flowing of winds between eastern and western parts of Indian Ocean.
- A 'positive IOD' — or simply 'IOD' — is associated with cooler than normal sea-surface temperatures in the eastern equatorial Indian Ocean and warmer than normal sea-surface temperatures in the western tropical Indian Ocean.
- The opposite phenomenon is called a 'negative IOD', and is characterised by warmer than normal SSTs in the eastern equatorial Indian Ocean and cooler than normal SSTs in the western tropical Indian Ocean.



**START YOUR
JOURNEY WITH THE
BEST**

COME JOIN WITH US





VEDHIK

IAS ACADEMY

The New Learning Mantra

START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

**INDIA'S
TOP MOST
CIVIL SERVANTS
FOR COACHING**

www.vedhikiasacademy.org

Head Office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Mercy Estate,
MG Road, Ravipuram,
Ernakulam-682 015,

Corporate office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

Regional office

Vedhik IAS Academy
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,
Museum Road. Bangalore -
560001. Karnataka, India.

GCC Office:

Bobscoedu,

Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain
www.bobscoedu.com