

## Current Affairs:01.12.2021

### GDP growth of 8.4% in Q2

**In News:** India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 8.4% in the July to September quarter, compared to a **7.4% contraction** a year ago, with the economy's gross value added (GVA) rising 8.5%, the National Statistical Office said on Tuesday.

- Factoring in the first quarter GDP growth of 20.1%, **the first half of this year has recorded 13.7% growth** and India is likely to record double digit growth for 2021-22 as a whole.
- It shows that the recovery process is continuing to play out.
- Economists, however, were not fully convinced about the extent and durability of this recovery and reacted with caution.
- Though the absolute GDP in the second quarter (Q2) was 0.3% higher than **pre-pandemic levels**, there were still many worrying areas.
- In particular, the insipid **private consumption spending** that still lagging below pre-COVID levels along with activity in employment-intensive sectors like construction and contact-intensive sectors like retail and hotels.
- The **base effect of negative growth last year** also helped nudge the GDP numbers up.
- **Investments, largely from the Government**, continued to remain the key growth drivers while private consumption is yet to show a decisive recovery.
- On the domestic demand side, only gross fixed capital formation emerged positive in Q2 over the 2019-20 level.
- Even if the pace of recovery is sustained in the next two quarters, India's GDP for the year is expected to be only marginally higher than that in 2019-20 (by around 2%),”
- Improvements in Demand and investments are expected to be limited and gradual given that even before the pandemic, the domestic economy was grappling with slowdown.

### HC and SC Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021

**In News:** Government has introduced a bill that proposes to amend the High Court Judges (Salaries and Condition of Service) Act and the Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Condition of Service) Act.

### Key Takeaways

- According to the bill, in 2009 the two laws were amended to provide that every retired judge or after his death, the family, as the case may be, will be entitled to an additional quantum of pension or family pension.
- Accordingly, the additional quantum of pension to retired judges of the high courts and the Supreme Court is being sanctioned on completing the age of 80 years, 85 years, 90 years, 95 years and 100 years, as the case may be.
- The bill seeks to bring clarity from when Supreme Court and high court judges are entitled to an additional quantum of pension or family pension on attaining a certain age.

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- The additional quantum of pension to a retired judge was earlier calculated **from the first day of the month in which he completes 80/90/95/100 years** the and not from the **first day of his entering the age**. However, Gauhati HC and Madhya Pradesh HC reiterated that the calculation of pension must start from first day of his entering the age.
- To clarify the matter and to align the provisions of law to the High Court judgements, the government has brought in this amendment bill.

## 6 lakh Indians renounced citizenship

**In News:** More than six lakh Indians renounced citizenship in the past five years, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

### Key Takeaways

- Number of Indians who gave up citizenship stood at

Year	Number of Indians giving up citizenship
2017	1,33,049
2018	1,34,561
2019	1,44,017
2020	85,248
2021 (till Sep 30)	1,11,287

- The reason for a large number of Indians surrendering their citizenship was not stated in the reply by Minister of Home Affairs.
- In 2018, the MHA had revised the form for declaration of renunciation of citizenship, which, for the first time, included a column on “circumstances/reasons for renouncing Indian citizenship”.
- Recently, the **MHA had simplified the process** and provisions were made for the applicants to upload documents online and an upper limit of 60 days was fixed for the renunciation process to be completed.
- According to a **Global Wealth Migration Review report**, in 2019, India came second only to China when it came to high net worth individuals (HNIs) leaving the country. As many as 7,000 HNIs left India in 2019.
- Government added that in the period 2016-20, 10,645 foreigners applied for Indian citizenship, of which more than 7,782 were from Pakistan and 452 were stateless.
- During the same period, **4,177 persons were granted Indian citizenship** but the country-wise breakup was not provided.
- A total number of **1,33,83,718 Indian nationals were living in foreign countries**, the reply stated.

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- The Minister said the persons covered under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 might apply **after the rules were notified**.
- Government also reiterated that it has not taken any decision to prepare the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) at the national level.

## Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

**Context:** Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana scheme was launched to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in India was recently launched. The PMMSY is an umbrella scheme with two separate Components: (a) Central Sector Scheme (CS) and (b) Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).

### Key takeaways

- Total estimated investment will be of Rs. 20,050 crores to be implemented over a period of 5 years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25.
- **Goal:** To double the fish exports in the next 3 to 4 years i.e. by 2024-25.
- **Objective:**
  - (1) To address critical gaps in fish production and productivity; quality, technology, post-harvest infrastructure and management, modernisation and strengthening of value chain, traceability, establishing a robust fisheries management framework and fishers' welfare;
  - (2) Harnessing of fisheries potential in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner;
  - (3) enhancing contribution to Agriculture GVA and exports;
  - (4) Social, physical and economic security for fishers and fish farmers;
  - (5) Robust fisheries management and regulatory framework

## Steps Taken by Government to Eradicate Anaemia Among Pregnant Women

**In News:** As per recently released National Family Health Survey-V data, 52.2 percent pregnant women in the age group 15-49 years are estimated to be anaemic in the country.

### Steps taken –

In 2018, the Government of India launched the **Anaemia Mukh Bharat (AMB) strategy** with the target to reduce anaemia in women, children and adolescents in life cycle approach. Anaemia Mukh Bharat (AMB) strategy as a part of Poshan Abhiyan aims to strengthen the existing mechanisms and foster newer strategies to tackle anaemia, which include testing & treatment of anaemia in school going adolescents & pregnant women, addressing non nutritional causes of anaemia and a comprehensive communication strategy.

- Prophylactic Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation including Adolescents girls (10-19 years)
- Intensified year-round Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)
- Campaign including ensuring delayed cord clamping
  - Testing of anaemia using digital methods and point of care treatment

- Addressing non-nutritional causes of anaemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis
- Management of severe anaemia in pregnant women undertaken by administration of IV Iron Sucrose/Blood transfusion
- Providing incentives to the ANM for identification and follow-up of pregnant women with severe anaemia in high priority districts (HPDs)
- Training and orientation of Medical Officers and front line-workers on newer Maternal Health and Anaemia Mukh Bharat guidelines
- Field level awareness by ASHAs through community mobilization activities and IEC and BCC activities focused on anaemia in pregnant women

## The Iran-US deadlock over nuclear capability

**Context:** After a gap of five months, Iran, Russia, China and the European countries resumed negotiations in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), that had sought to restrict Iran's nuclear programme.

- As Iran has refused to hold direct talks with the U.S., European officials will shuttle between the Iranian and American delegations, exchanging talking points and seeking common ground.

## What were the terms of the nuclear agreement?

- The 2015 agreement sought to cut Iran off a possible path to a nuclear bomb in return for the **lifting of economic sanctions**.
- Iran maintains that its **nuclear programme is peaceful**, a claim disputed by many international powers.
- At the time of the agreement, Iran had **two nuclear enrichment plants**— Natanz and Fordow — that were enriching uranium at a higher purity than what's required for a civilian programme, and had almost 20,000 centrifuges.
- Typically, low-enriched uranium, with less than 5% concentration of the fissile isotopes U-235, is used in nuclear power plants. While uranium with 20% and more purity is used in research reactors, the fuel with **90% purity is used in bombs**. Centrifuges are used to enrich uranium.
- **Reduce Purity & Stockpile:** According to the 2015 deal, Iran agreed to cut its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98% to 300 kg and keep them at a low purity level of 3.67%.
- **Open to Inspection:** Restrictions were introduced on the number of centrifuges it could keep and Iran agreed to open all its facilities to the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- These measures meant that even if Iran reneged on the promises and decided to make a bomb, it would take at least one year (the breakout period) to manufacture enough highly enriched uranium and centrifuges to do so.
- In return for Iran signing the agreement, the US administration under Obama lifted sanctions on Iran.

## What triggered the current crisis?

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- **US withdrawal from deal:** In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump, Barack Obama's successor, unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the nuclear deal despite the UN certification that Iran was complying with all the terms of the agreement.
- **Criticism of Inadequate Measures:** Critics of the deal in USA as well as in Saudi Arabia and Israel argued that the agreement was inadequate to address Iran's growing influence in the region.
- **Scope for Rise of Iran:** Critics of agreement argued that the lifting of the sanctions would leave Iran economically more powerful and raise its geopolitical profile, which would pose fresh challenges to America's allies in West Asia.
- **US need for new Items in Negotiation:** The Trump administration also wanted to negotiate Iran's ballistic missile programme as part of a new agreement.
- **Breakdown of deal & return of Status quo:** After pulling out of the JCPOA, the U.S. reimposed sanctions on Iran and then invited Iran for talks. Iran, on the other side, not just refused to talk with the Trump administration, but also resumed its nuclear programme.

## Where do talks stand now?

- Joe Biden, during the campaign, had promised to revive the nuclear deal. After his election, he appointed a **special envoy for Iran**.
- Indirect talks with Iran through Europeans started immediately. But no agreement was reached after six rounds in Vienna.
- A **change of Government in Iran** made matters more complicated. Now, the Iranian delegation, appointed by the new Government of President Ebrahim Raisi, has come forward for talks, which has raised hopes for a breakthrough. But there still are several thorny issues.
  - **Iran has substantially stepped up its nuclear activities** since 2019. It has installed more than 1,000 more advanced centrifuges at its plants, which can enrich uranium more quickly.
  - Iran has also **started enriching uranium** to 20% purity or more, which is a technical step away from the weapons grade level.
  - In February, Iran scuttled the IAEA's oversight of its nuclear sights, but agreed to keep recording devices in place that would allow the agency to continue to monitor the plants.
  - In recent months, **Iran removed the IAEA camera from a factory** in Karaj, outside Tehran, that makes equipment for centrifuges.
  - According to some reports, the advances Iran made in its nuclear programme has **reduced the current breakout time** (to make nuclear bomb) to as little as a month, from a year when the deal was alive.

## What future prospects does the negotiations hold?

- The Biden administration has said that it was ready to take necessary steps to revive the JCPOA, including removing sanctions, but it **wants Iran to return to the agreement first** — which means

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- Iran should stop enriching uranium
- Ship out the highly enriched fuel as well as the centrifuges
- Open the nuclear sites for international inspection.
- Iran also says it's ready to return to the deal but it **wants the U.S. to remove all the sanctions first** and give assurances to Iran that a future American leader would not go back on the promises as Mr. Trump did.
- As a result, the talks have **reached a stalemate**.
- In Vienna, the challenge is to **find some common ground** so that at least the process of reviving the deal can begin. Time is running out for all parties with Iran moving fast with its nuclear programme.

## The Golden jubilee of Bangladesh Liberation War “Operation Searchlight – The Untold Story”

March 26 marks 50 years since the start of Bangladesh's liberation war, a bloody nine-month campaign that culminated in the nation's independence on December 16, 1971. It was a violent birth, with some of its roots in the 1947 partition of India – when Pakistan was created as a separate nation.

### Background

- As the British Empire left the subcontinent, an estimated 200,000 to 1.5 million people were killed in sectarian violence associated with the partition and 10 million to 15 million were forcibly displaced.
- Newly independent Pakistan comprised two separate geographical areas separated by over a thousand miles of Indian terrain. While both regions included significant Muslim populations, West Pakistan was made up largely of Punjabi, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Baloch and other smaller ethnic groups. In contrast, the population of East Pakistan, which became modern-day Bangladesh, was predominantly ethnically Bengali, as the territory was formerly part of the Indian region of Bengal.
- Each of these factors – particularly the differences in language and political and economic inequities – laid the groundwork for Bangladesh's independence struggle.

### Challenges faced by East Pakistan

**Jinnah's proclamation:** Just eight months into Pakistan's existence, Jinnah had arrived in Dhaka and addressed two rallies.

- He declared Urdu the state language of West and East Pakistan. He forgot that the people of East Pakistan did not speak Urdu — they spoke Bangla. The seeds of the Bangla Language Movement — as well as the Bangladesh Liberation War — could be traced to Jinnah's proclamation.
- **The Urdu-only policy** aimed to create a single identity out of two culturally distinct regions united by a common religion – Islam. More broadly, it aimed to consolidate the national identity of the recently independent Pakistan.
- In East Pakistan, the declaration was followed by the banning of Bengali books, songs and poetry by Bengali Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

- Bangla language as the medium of education and primary mode of instruction was also banned.
- All currency and official documents, including postal stamps and railway tickets, were printed in Urdu.

A major reason for this was also **significant economic disparities between the two regions.**

- West Pakistan controlled the country's industry and commerce while East Pakistan was predominantly the supplier for raw materials, setting up a situation of unequal exchange.
- West Pakistan deprived and coerced East Pakistan in more areas than one.
- Jute — and other crops — cultivated in East Pakistan had their prices determined in West Pakistan; a mere half of the profits trickled back to East Pakistan.
- Apples, grapes or woollen garments produced in West Pakistan were sold at 10 times the price in East Pakistan.
- Discrimination was such that the slightest of dissent branded one an enemy of Pakistan or of Islam.
- Persecution, arrests, incarcerations were the order of the day.
- In 1959-60 the per capita income in West Pakistan was 32% higher than in East Pakistan. By 1969-70, it was 81% higher in West Pakistan.
- Investment policies including in educational infrastructure consistently favoured West Pakistan.
- East Pakistanis had little access to the Central government, which was located in the West Pakistani city of Islamabad. They were severely underrepresented in politics.
- West Pakistani political leadership did not see Bengalis as “real” Muslims. Both in political circles and socially, Bengali cultural practices were considered of a lower social status.

## The seeds of Liberation

- **Bhasha Andolon:** On February 21, 1952, students and other activists launched a language movement called the “Bhasha Andolon,” which demanded Bangla be recognized as the state language for East Pakistan. Thousands of school and college students protested, defying Section 144 of the Criminal Procedural Code, which prohibited assembly of five or more people and holding of public meetings. The crackdown that followed claimed several lives. From 1950 to 1969 it also galvanised a growing movement for autonomy across East Pakistan.
- **1969 uprising:** A mass uprising in 1969 was brutally put down by police and led to the imposition of martial law.
- **Cyclone Bhola:** In 1970, a devastating cyclone called “Bhola” in East Pakistan claimed 300,000 to 500,000 lives. The indifferent response of the West Pakistan government further inflamed tensions.
- **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won national election:** A big turning point came the same year when the sole majority political party in East Pakistan, led by Bengali politician [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#), won a landslide victory in national elections. The Pakistani leadership was reluctant to accept the results because it did not want an East

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Pakistani political party heading the federal government. This resulted in the start of a civil disobedience movement in East Pakistan.

- **Launch of Operation Searchlight:** As the demand for Bengali autonomy grew, the Pakistani government launched Operation Searchlight, a military operation to crush the emerging movement. According to journalist Robert Payne, it killed at least 7,000 Bengali civilians – both Hindus and Muslims – in a single night.

*On March 26, Bangladesh was declared independent and the liberation war began.*

## The Birth of Bangladesh

At midnight on March 25, Pakistan unleashed genocide in Bangladesh. Refugees streamed into India. On December 3, India officially entered the war on the side of Bangladesh.

- As Pakistan's atrocities increased, then PM Indira Gandhi decided to take action and ordered the Indian Army to launch an offensive against Pakistan followed by a full scale war against its neighbor.
- Indian Army captured around 15000 km of Pak territory with the war lasting around 13 days and ending with the fall of Dhaka and the public surrender of Pak military.

On December 16, 1971, the Pakistani military surrendered to the Indian Army, marking it as Bangladesh's Victory Day. As the genocide began on the night of March 25-26 is commemorated as the day of liberation.

## What is J&K's Roshni Act?

A year after the High Court struck down the Roshni Act, the Jammu and Kashmir government has now begun an exercise to retrieve the land granted under this Act to beneficiaries.

There are allegations related to irregularities in the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir States Land (vesting of ownership to the occupants) Act, also known as Roshini Act, which has now been declared null and void.

On November 1, 2020, the Union Territory administration cancelled all land transfers that took place under the JK State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001.

## About the Roshini Act:

Enacted in 2001, the law sought to regularise unauthorised land. The Act envisaged the transfer of ownership rights of state land to its occupants, subject to the payment of a cost, as determined by the government.

The government said the revenue generated would be spent on commissioning hydroelectric power projects, hence the name "Roshni".

Further, through amendments, the government also gave ownership rights of agricultural land to farmers occupying it for free, charging them only Rs 100 per kanal as documentation fee.

## Why it was scrapped?



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In 2009, the State Vigilance Organisation registered an FIR against several government officials for alleged criminal conspiracy to illegally possess and vest ownership of state land to occupants who did not satisfy criteria under the Roshni Act. In 2014, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) estimated that against the targeted Rs 25,000 crore, only Rs 76 crore had been realised from the transfer of encroached land between 2007 and 2013, thus defeating the purpose of the legislation. The report blamed irregularities including arbitrary reduction in prices fixed by a standing committee, and said this was done to benefit politicians and affluent people.