

The Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) is following the set of criteria set out by the Lokur Committee nearly 60 years ago to define any new community as a Scheduled Tribe. Approval of the Office of the RGI is mandatory for the inclusion of any community on ST lists, as per the procedure for scheduling tribes. In response to a query under the Right to Information Act, the Office of the RGI on Tuesday said, "For criteria, report of the Advisory Committee on the revision of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Lokur Committee 1965) is consulted."

Ahead of the budget presentation in the Rajasthan Assembly session, beginning later this month, a demand has gained momentum here for making Rajasthani the State's official language. Hundreds of youths gathered at Shaheed Smarak in Jaipur under the banner of Rajasthani Yuva Samiti earlier this week and demanded the official language status for their Mayad Bhasha (mother tongue).

The Mizoram government has written to the Central government that a strategic road project, planned as a counter to a Chinese government funded double lane road in neighbouring Myanmar, which runs parallel to the State, faces cancellation as the funds have lapsed. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) that was awarded the contract "has not yet completed construction of even one metre" of the road in the past 26 months, following which Mizoram Chief Minister Zoram thanga has written to the Centre that the project may be handed over to the State Public Works Department.

The Union Cabinet approved an outlay of ₹2,600 crore to promote payments using RuPay cards and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), said Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav on Wednesday. Banks will be provided this incentive money to promote such digital payments, an official press release said. The fund will be paid to banks in view of the lack of a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) — a commission on digital transactions — for UPI and RuPay transactions. This regime has led to complaints from the Reserve Bank of India and banks, the Cabinet said, which have been worried about the sustainability of building digital payments infrastructure in the absence of payments needed to maintain them.

Amid a debate on the process of appointment of judges, Vice-president Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday made strong comments on "public posturing" or "one-upmanship" by the judiciary. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla also spoke in a similar vein. Inaugurating the 83rd All India Presiding Officers conference, Mr. Dhankhar, who is the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, said that as presiding officers of legislatures, "We cannot have an ostrich like stance on judiciary legislature relations." "Parliamentary sovereignty cannot be permitted to be diluted or compromised by the executive or the judiciary, and public posturing or 'one-upmanship' that is being frequently witnessed in this matter is not 'wholesome'".

The district administration in Bihar's Muzaffarpur has stepped in to help workers employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme resolve the problems

### MINIMAL IMPROVEMENT IN AIR QUALITY IN CITIES UNDER NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME (NCAP)

1. A progress report on NCAP from Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), an independent research organisation, found that: Only 49 of 131 cities recorded an improvement in air quality in FY 21-22. Less than 50% utilisation of total funds released under NCAP. Only 37 cities completed source apportionment studies (list out and quantify major sources of pollution in a city) which were supposed to be completed in 2020.
2. **About NCAP**-Launched in 2019, it is a time-bound, national level strategy from Central Government to tackle air pollution problem across country in a comprehensive manner. It aims a 40% reduction in Particulate Matter (PM) concentrations by 2026 (base year 2017) in 131 cities (123 non-attainment cities and 42 million plus cities/urban agglomerations; 34 cities are common in both categories).
3. Initial target was 20-30% reduction in PM by 2024 in 102 cities. City-specific action plans are prepared to regulate PM2.5 and PM10. Progress is monitored by PRANA portal (Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in non-Attainment cities). In a related news, Delhi continued to be most polluted city in 2022 (for PM2.5) based on Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

### ONEWEB TO INCREASE SATELLITE COUNT FOR GLOBAL INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

1. With its recent launch, One Web started its 'Countdown to Global Connectivity' campaign marking final launches remaining to complete its first-generation LEO (low-earth orbit) satellite constellation.
2. OneWeb is a global communications network to provide space-based connectivity. It is backed by investors like Bharti Enterprises, UK government etc. Satellite Internet Services is a wireless internet connection which uses satellites to get an internet signal from Internet Service Provider (ISP) to users.
3. It operates using two-way satellites like VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) or telecommunication satellites to liaison between ISPs and Users with satellite dishes. These can be geostationary satellites or satellites in LEO. It is different from satellite television as Internet signals must go both ways with a much greater amount of bandwidth to move all the data.
4. **Benefits of satellite internet services**-Easy internet option for rural areas, hilly terrains, and islands for Last Mile connectivity. Faster than Digital Subscriber Line connection. Can play a significant role in emergency or disaster recovery.
5. **Challenges in Satellite Internet Services**-Low Speed and High Latency in comparison to fiber optic cables. Limitations of Bandwidth with high impact of weather aberrations. Potential to damage spacecrafts/satellites or interrupt higher satellites frequency.

### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS (NCPDR) FRAMES DRAFT GUIDELINES ON ASSESSING IF MINORS CAN BE TRIED AS ADULTS

1. In compliance with Supreme Court directive (Barun Chandra Thakur vs Master Bholu), draft guidelines are for Conducting Preliminary Assessment under Section 15 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
2. Earlier, all under the age of 18 were considered minors. It was amended in 2015 to add a provision wherein a child in age group of 16-18 years could be tried as an adult in case of heinous offences. Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) carries physical and mental assessment to determine whether to try such a child as an adult or a minor.
3. **Key highlights of Draft Guidelines**-General Principles: JJB and other experts should abide by fundamental principles of care and protection including Principle of presumption of innocence, best interest, safety, natural justice etc. Preliminary Assessment Purpose: Determine age and four determinants, i.e., Physical capacity of the child, mental capacity, circumstances, and the ability to understand consequences of alleged offence.
4. **Role of JJB**: It is solely responsible for assessment. Also, it can take assistance from child psychologists or psycho-social workers. Completion of Preliminary Assessment: Within a period of three months.

### GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS REPORT BY WORLD BANK

they face while marking their attendance using the National Mobile Monitoring System.

₹4,276 crore, the worth of the three procurement proposals approved by the Defence Ministry, including that of Helina antitank guided missiles, to bolster the combat capabilities of the Armed forces along the Line of Actual Control with China. The proposals were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council.

6.6 percentage, India's economic growth rate in the next financial year from 6.9% in 2022-23, according to the World Bank's latest projection. India however is expected to be the fastest growing economy of the seven largest emerging market and developing economies, it said. The growth rate in FY23 compares with 8.7% the previous year.

3 number of new cooperative societies the government decided to establish to promote organic products, seeds and exports. The decision was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Cabinet approved the establishment of multiple societies.

By January 11, 723 houses from the town of Joshimath had developed major or minor cracks on the floors, ceilings, and walls. In response, 145 families have been temporarily moved to safer locations within the town. Joshimath's geological setting, together with the unplanned and rampant construction in and around the town, has resulted in land subsidence. The town is built on the deposits of an old landslide, which means that the slopes can be destabilised even by slight triggers. A report on Joshimath published by the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA) in September 2022 said that the floods of June 2013 and February 2021 heightened erosion in the area.

With the Ukraine conflict entering the second year, India will focus on the "substance, not the symbolism" of outcomes at the G-20 summit, Chief Coordinator Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Wednesday. In a possible indication that Russian President Vladimir Putin may skip the September summit, officials separately said they hoped Mr. Putin would visit India for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, which is tentatively scheduled for June. Mr. Putin had missed the G-20 summits in Italy in 2021 and in Indonesia in 2022.

1. Flagship report (issued twice a year) examines global economic developments and prospects, with a special Focus on emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs).
2. **Key Projections-Global GDP Growth:** 1.7% in 2023 - third-weakest pace since 1993, overshadowed only by 2009 and 2020 global recessions.
3. India is expected to grow at 6.6% in 2023. Reasons for slowdown: Elevated Inflation, Higher interest rates, reduced investment and disruptions caused by Russia-Ukraine war. Any additional adverse shocks could push the global economy into recession.
3. Recession is a significant, pervasive, and persistent decline in economic activity – at least for two consecutive quarters of negative GDP for most analysis. EMDEs are facing a multi-year period of slow growth driven by heavy debt burdens and weak investment. This may threaten progress on broader development and climate goals in EMDEs.
4. **Small states** - countries with 1.5 million people or fewer - are more vulnerable because of their reliance on external trade and financing, limited diversification, elevated debt, and susceptibility to natural disaster. Steps needed for EMDEs include more investment to create jobs and increase output, greater debt transparency, stronger cooperation to increase cross-border trade etc.

### PRICE VOLATILITY, INFRA CONSTRAINTS CHALLENGE INDIA'S TARGET OF EXPANDING NATURAL GAS' ENERGY SHARE

1. A recent report by Fitch Ratings stated that: India's inadequate gas pipeline network and execution delays in some under construction projects may limit natural gas demand growth. Sustained high natural gas prices and customers switching to alternate fuels may squeeze developers' returns and fresh capex plans.
2. India has decided to raise target of share of natural gas in the energy mix to 15% by 2030 from current around 6% (well below the global average of 24%). India has been taking steps to move towards a gas-based economy considering its significance such as: Economic advantage: CNG is cheaper than gasoline and diesel. Environment friendly because of very low emission of particulate matter. Fulfilling climate change mitigation commitments.
3. **Measures Taken**-Natural Gas Marketing Reforms announced to increase domestic production of natural gas. Gas Trading Exchange has been set up for localized price discovery. Planned \$60bn investment for creating gas infrastructure, including for pipelines and CGD (city gas distribution) networks. Connected eastern and north-eastern parts with gas grid by developing Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project and North East Gas Grid project.

### C/2022 E3 (ZTF) COMET

1. Recently discovered (by Palomar Observatory, USA) Comet will appear for the first time in 50,000 years. Comets are frozen leftovers from formation of solar system (4.6 billion years ago) composed of dust, rock, and ices.
2. When a comet's orbit brings it close to Sun, it heats up and spews dust and gases (forming a tail) into a giant glowing head larger than most planets.
3. Billions of comets are orbiting our Sun in Kuiper Belt (called short-period comets) and even more distant Oort Cloud (called long-period comets).



"I know there will be a day when gravity will win. But I get up every day and I would have defeated her every single day of my life."

**DR. KHAN**  
(KSG)