

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

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NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

- There is a need to clear the air on the follow up to expert recommendations, which the State can do through a white paper. Mumbai's neglect is not unique, though, and most big cities are amorously expanding to the suburbs where basic infrastructure including drainage is absent, and lakes and rivers are heavily encroached, often with political support. Such unplanned growth, with no defences against weather disasters, is leaving cities a lot poorer.
- India's engagement with the Taliban may or may not achieve much, but non engagement will definitely hurt Indian interests. In an ideal world, the Taliban, given its bloody past, should not have been anywhere near governing Afghanistan, but it is neither an ideal situation nor is the Taliban stoppable from gaining power in Kabul. So New Delhi must exorcise the demons of IC814 (the December 1999 hijacking) from its collective memory and engage with the Taliban 2.0 — there is no need to be secretive or embarrassed about it.
- India's health system will not benefit from ad hoc and a patchwork of one or other small packages. It essentially needs some transformational changes. The COVID19 package II appears insufficient and seems to be based upon a misguided assumption that infrastructure is equal to health services. Governments (both Union and State) seem to be on the path to repeat four decade old mistakes.
- India has signed 26 bilateral pacts, 15 memoranda of understanding and two agreements on security cooperation with different countries for combating illicit trafficking of narcotic, drugs and psychotropic substances, besides chemical precursors, according to a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reply in the Lok Sabha.
- China said its cooperation with the United States on climate change will depend on the overall state of relations between the two countries.

PROVISIONS OF 97TH AMENDMENT STRUCK DOWN:SC

- 1.The Supreme Court (SC) upheld a 2013 judgment of the Gujarat High Court and struck down certain provisions of the Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011. It gave a major boost for federalism as the 97th Amendment shrank the exclusive authority of States over its co-operative societies, a sector considered as a massive contributor to the economy.
- 2.The provisions in the Amendment, passed by Parliament without getting them ratified by State legislatures as required by the Constitution. It went to the extent of determining the number of directors a society should have or their length of tenure and even the necessary expertise required to become a member of the society.
- 3.SC's Ruling:However, within their own sphere, the States have exclusive power to legislate on topics reserved exclusively to them. Part IX B, which consists of Articles 243ZH to 243ZT, has "significantly and substantially impacted" State legislatures' "exclusive legislative power" over its co-operative sector under Entry 32 of the State List.
- 4.The court pointed out how Article 243ZI makes it clear that a State may only make law on the incorporation, regulation and winding up of a society subject to the provisions of Part IXB of the 97th Amendment.

DIRECTOR OF INQUIRY FOR LOKPAL

- 1.In a RTI Reply, it has been revealed that the Centre is yet to appoint a director of inquiry, more than two years after the Lokpal came into being.
- 2.As per the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, there shall be a Director of Inquiry, not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Central Government. As per the provisions contained under Section 20 (1) (b) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, complaints in respect of public servants are referred by the Lokpal to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) for a preliminary inquiry.
- 3.The non-appointment of director of inquiry again reflects the lack of political will for strengthened Lokpal in India.
- 4.Issues Regarding Lokpal: **Lokpal is not free from political influence as the appointing committee itself consists of members from political parties.** The selection committee for Lokpal is composed of the Prime Minister who is the Chairperson; Speaker of Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Chief Justice of India or a Judge nominated by him/her and One eminent jurist.

INDIA INEQUALITY REPORT 2021:OXFAM

- 1.The report titled "**India Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story**" released by Oxfam India shows that the socio-economic inequalities seep into the health sector and disproportionately affect health outcomes of marginalised communities due to the absence of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- 2.The report suggested that the states which are attempting to reduce existing inequalities and with higher expenditure on health had lower confirmed cases of Covid-19.
- 3.The states that have for the past few years been reducing inequalities, such as inequalities to access to health between the general category and SC and ST populations, have less confirmed cases of Covid – such as Telangana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.
4. India also ranks the lowest in the number of hospital beds per thousand population among the BRICS nations at 0.5. It is lower than lesser developed countries such as Bangladesh (0.87), Chile (2.11) and Mexico (0.98).