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INDIAN EXPRESS Page 12

LATERAL ENTRY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 –Governance)

Lateral entry into bureaucracy

Centre has opened another round of lateral recruitments into senior posts in the bureaucracy. Such appointments have been criticised for not extending reservations to people of SC, ST and OBC communities

SHYAMLAL YADAV
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 18

THE UNION Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Saturday issued an advertisement seeking applications for "talented and motivated Indian nationals for Lateral Recruitment" to the posts of Joint Secretary, Director, and Deputy Secretary in 24 ministries of the Union government.

A total of 45 posts have been advertised with individuals having appropriate qualifications and experience from State/UT governments, PSUs, statutory organisations, research institutes and universities, and even the private sector eligible to apply. The advertisement mentions that all posts are "suitable for candidates belonging to the category of Persons with Benchmark Disability (PwBD)."

What is 'lateral entry' into the bureaucracy?

In 2017, NITI Aayog, in its three-year Action Agenda, and the Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGoS) on Governance in its report submitted in February, recommended the induction of personnel at middle and senior management levels in the central government. These 'lateral entrants' would be part of the central secretariat which, till then, had only career bureaucrats from the All India Services/ Central Civil Services. They would be given three-year long contracts, extendable to up to five years.

Which positions are open?

Based on this recommendation, the first vacancies for lateral entrants was advertised in 2018, but only for Joint Secretary level positions. Posts of the rank of Director and Deputy Secretary were opened later.

A Joint Secretary, appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), has the third-highest rank (after Secretary and Additional Secretary) in a Department, and functions as the administrative head of a wing in the Department. Directors are one rank below Joint Secretaries, and Deputy Secretaries are one rank below Directors, although they perform the same job in most ministries. While Director/Deputy Secretaries are considered middle-level officials in a department, the Joint Secretary-level is where the decision-making starts.

What was the Union government's logic behind introducing lateral entries?

In 2019, Minister of State for the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) Jitendra Singh told the Rajya Sabha that "lateral recruitment is aimed at achieving the twin objectives of bringing in fresh talent as well as augment the availability of manpower".

On August 8, 2024, Singh said that "Keeping in view their specialized knowledge and expertise in the domain area, lateral recruitment at the level of Joint Secretary, Director and Deputy Secretary in Government of India, has been undertaken to appoint persons for specific assignments."

Basically, the idea behind lateral recruitment is for the government to tap into individuals' domain expertise and specialised know-how, regardless of whether they are career bureaucrats or not. In line with this idea, officials of various Central Civil Services have been given opportunities to serve in the Central Secretariat in the last decade, though it was always considered IAS-dominated.

How many people have been appointed via lateral recruitment so far?

The first round began in 2018 and attracted 6,077 applications for Joint Secretary-level posts. After a selection process by the UPSC, nine individuals were recommended for the appointment to nine different Ministries/Departments in 2019.

Other rounds were advertised in 2021, and then in 2023. In total, as MoS Jitendra Singh told the Upper House on August 9, "63 appointments have been made through lateral entry... in the last five years. Presently, 57 officers [lateral entrants] occupy positions in Ministries/ Departments."

Why has it been criticised?

Lateral entries have been criticised on the ground that there are no quotas for Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) candidates in such recruitment.

Reacting to the latest advertisement, Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge posted on X that the "the BJP is deliberately making such recruitments in jobs so that SC, ST, OBC categories can be kept away from reservation".

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav condemned the move as a "disgusting joke", saying that had the 45 advertised appointments been made through the civil services examination, "nearly half of the openings would be reserved for SC, ST, and OBC candidates".

Why are there no quotas in recruitment?

In a May 15, 2018 circular, the DoPT noted that "in respect of appointments to Central Government posts and services there shall be reservation for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/Other Backward Class candidates in temporary appointments which are to last for 45 days or more". This was a reiteration — with OBCs added — of a circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs as far back as on September 24, 1968. In effect, reservations have to be offered for any appointment into the bureaucracy.

However, on November 29, 2018, whil
the first round of lateral recruitment was b
ing carried out, then DoPT Addition
Secretary Sujata Chaturvedi wrote a letter t
UPSC Secretary Rakesh Gupta, Secretary say
ing: "The candidates to be considered fro
the State Government, Public Secto
Autonomous Bodies, Statutory Bodie
Universities, would be taken on Deputatio
(Including Short Term Contract) with lien
the parent department. There are no instru
tions stipulating mandatory reservation f
appointment on deputation".

The letter further stated that "The perse
arrangement of filling up these posts may h
deemed as a close approximation of deput
tion, where mandatory reservation f
SC/ST/OBC is not necessary. However, if clu
eligible SC/ST/OBC candidates are eligible, the
should be considered and priority may b
given to such candidates in similarly situate
cases for ensuring holistic representation".

How have lateral entries been kept out of the ambit of reservation?

Reservation in public jobs and univers
ties is implemented via what is known as th
"13-point roster". According to this policy,
candidate's position on a roster of opening
is determined by dividing the quota percen
age of their group by hundred.

For example, the OBC quota is 27
Therefore, OBC candidates are recruited
every 4th post for which a vacancy arises
a department/cadre (100/27=3.7). Likewis
SC candidates, with 15% reservation, are su
posed to fill every 7th vacancy (100/15=6.66
ST candidates, with 7.5% reservation, are su
posed to fill every 14th vacanc
(100/7.5=13.33), and EWS candidates, wit
10% reservation, are supposed to fill ever
10th vacancy (100/10=10).

According to this formula, however, ther
is no reservation for up to three vacancie
Files obtained from the DoPT by *The India*
Express under the RTI Act state that "In a sin
gle post cadre, reservation does not appl
Since each post to be filled under this schem
[lateral entry] is a Single Post, reservation
not applicable" (reported on June 14, 2019)

In the current round of recruitment, th
UPSC has advertised 45 openings. If thes
were to be considered as a single group, a
cording to the 13-point roster, six vacancie
would be reserved for SC candidates, thre
for ST candidates, 12 for OBC candidates, an
four for the EWS category. But since these v
cancies have been advertised separately fo
each department, all of them are effectivel
single-post vacancies, and hence bypass th
policy of reservations.

The view from Centre and Opposition



"I have always said that the underprivileged are not represented in all the country's top posts, including the top bureaucracy... they are being pushed further away from the top posts through lateral entry."
RAHUL GANDHI, LOK SABHA LOP, CONGRESS LEADER



"If people from SC, ST and OBC categories are not given appointments in proportion to their quota in these government appointments, it will be a direct violation of the Constitution."
MAYAWATI, EX-UP CM, BSP SUPREMO



"Lateral recruitment is aimed at... bringing in fresh talent as well as [to] augment the availability of manpower... as supplementation and not replacement of the existing services."
JITENDRA SINGH, MINISTER OF STATE, DOPT

Lack of Quotas in Lateral Recruitment

- **Reiterated Reservation Policy**: The DoPT's 2018 circular emphasized reservations for SC/ST/OBC candidates in temporary Central Government posts lasting over 45 days.
- **Historical Policy Background**: This directive builds on a 1968 circular by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which originally mandated reservations in government appointments.
- **Applicability to Bureaucracy**: The policy ensures that reservations are applicable to all appointments within the central bureaucracy, including temporary positions.

Context: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has issued an advertisement inviting applications from talented and motivated Indian nationals for Lateral Recruitment to the positions of Joint Secretary, Director, and Deputy Secretary in 24 Union government ministries.

Lateral Entry

- **About**: In 2017, NITI Aayog proposed the induction of professionals into central government roles at middle and senior management levels.
- **Role of Lateral Entrants**: These professionals, known as 'lateral entrants,' would join the central secretariat, traditionally composed of career bureaucrats from the All India Services or Central Civil Services.
- **Contract Duration**: Lateral entrants are offered contracts of three years, with the possibility of extension for up to five years.
- **First Vacancies**: The first lateral entry vacancies were advertised in 2018, specifically for the Joint Secretary level.
- **Expansion of Positions**: Later, positions for Director and Deputy Secretary levels were also opened for lateral entry.
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Joint Secretary**: Appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), a Joint Secretary holds the third-highest rank in a Department and serves as the administrative head of a department wing.
- **Director and Deputy Secretary**: Directors rank just below Joint Secretaries, and Deputy Secretaries rank below Directors. However, in many ministries, both perform similar roles.
- **Criticism**: Lateral entries have been criticised on the grounds that there are no quotas for SC, ST and OBC candidates in such recruitment.

PIB

Aug 18

KRISHI-DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM

(Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Agriculture)

MoS Shri Bhagirath Choudhary launches the digital geo-spatial platform, Krishi-Decision Support System

Context: The Union government recently launched Krishi-Decision Support System (Krishi-DSS), a unique digital geospatial platform aimed at enhancing agricultural decision-making.

Krishi-Decision Support System (Krishi-DSS)

- **About**: It is a pioneering geospatial platform tailored specifically for Indian agriculture.
- **Collaboration:** Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Space.
- **Features:**
  - **Detailed Data Capture**: Krishi-DSS captures intricate details, from vast agricultural fields to the smallest soil particles.
  - **Data Access**: It provides seamless access to a wide range of data, including satellite images, weather information, reservoir storage, groundwater levels, and soil health.
  - **Near Real-Time Information**: The platform delivers near real-time updates on key indicators such as soil moisture, water storage, crop conditions, and dry spells.
  - **One Nation-One Soil Information System**: This system offers comprehensive soil data, including details on soil type, pH levels, and overall soil health.
- **Significance:**
  - The platform enables the government to analyze cropping patterns by providing parcel-level crop maps for different years.
  - Accurate identification of field-parcel units allows for a better understanding of each parcel's needs, aiding in targeted agricultural interventions.
  - The ground-truth data library of Krishi-DSS fosters innovation by providing essential resources for researchers and the agricultural industry.

TRIBUNE Aug 18

VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

In helping countries of Global South, will not put needy under debt: PM Modi

Context: India is hosting the third edition of the Voice of Global South Summit, embodying the nation's philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Voice of Global South Summit

- **About:** It is an extension of Prime Minister of India's vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas" (Together with All, Development for All, Trust of All, and Efforts by All).
- **1st Summit**: January 2023
- **Objective:** Tthe summit has aimed to bring together countries from the Global South a term that refers to developing nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean to share their perspectives and priorities on various global issues.
- **Goal**: To unify the Global South's voice in influencing global decisions and ensuring their concerns are addressed on international platforms like the G20.
- **Theme:** An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future.

Global South

- **About**: The term "Global South" is used to describe countries frequently identified as developing, less developed, or underdeveloped. These nations are predominantly situated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- It was first used by political activist Carl Oglesby in 1969.
- **Global North countries**: US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand, while 'Global South' includes countries in Asia, Africa and South America.
- **Diverse Characteristics**: The nations of the Global South are primarily lower-income countries, many of which are industrializing and were historically impacted by colonization.

BUSINESS STANDARD

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PROJECT TO TACKLE MICROPLASTICS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Health & Nutrition)

Project to check microplastics in food launched

AKSHARA SRIVASTAVA
New Delhi, 18 August

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Sunday launched a project to tackle microplastic contamination in food and develop methods to detect it.

The food regulator, through the project, will develop standard protocols for analysis of micro/nano-plastic, conduct intra- and inter-laboratory comparisons, and generate data on microplastic exposure levels among consumers.



"While global studies have highlighted the presence of microplastics in various foods, it is imperative to generate reliable data specific to India. This project will help understand the extent of microplastic contamination in Indian food and guide the formulation of effective regulations and safety standards to protect public health," FSSAI stated in a release.

The project to develop and validate analytical methods for detecting micro and nano-plastics in various food products, and assess their prevalence and exposure levels in India started in March, the statement said.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had recently highlighted the presence of micro-plastics in common food items such as sugar and salt.

The study is being conducted in collaboration with the CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (Lucknow), ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (Kochi), and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (Pilani).

The findings from this project will not only inform the regulatory actions but also contribute to the global understanding of microplastic contamination, it added.

Context: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched a project to tackle microplastic contamination in food and develop methods to detect it.

Project to Tackle Microplastics

- **About:** The project focuses on micro-and nano-plastics as emerging food contaminants, aiming to establish validated methodologies and assess their prevalence in different food matrices.
- **Objectives:**
  - Develop and validate analytical methods for detecting micro and nano-plastics in various food products.
  - Establish standard protocols for micro/nano-plastic analysis across laboratories.
  - Conduct intra- and inter-laboratory comparisons to ensure consistency and reliability.
- **Data Generation and Exposure Assessment:**
  - Generate critical data on microplastic exposure levels among consumers in India.
  - Assess the prevalence of micro and nano-plastics in different food products, contributing to a better understanding of exposure levels.
- **Collaborative Effort**: The study is being conducted in collaboration with leading research institutions in India, including the CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (Lucknow), ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (Kochi), and Birla Institute of Technology and Science (Pilani).
- **Significance:**
  - The project aligns with concerns raised by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regarding the presence of microplastics in common food items like sugar and salt.
  - Findings from this project will help determine the extent of microplastic contamination in Indian food, guiding the formulation of effective regulations and safety standards to protect public health.

Microplastics

- **About**: These are minute fragments of diverse plastic materials present in the surroundings.
- These minute plastic particles pose a threat to marine environments and the creatures that inhabit them.

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CENTRAL PROTECTION ACT FOR DOCTORS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 –Health)

Do doctors need a Central protection Act?

Why are healthcare workers protesting across India? What happened at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata? What are the working conditions of junior doctors, interns and nurses? What are the key demands of the protesters?

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

The story so far:

Resident doctors across India are on strike demanding laws that ensure their safety while on duty. This follows the rape and murder of a young doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9. The protests started after the discovery of the doctor's body in the seminar room of the emergency building where she had been working. Doctors point out that while the hospital administration and State government attempted to underreport the incident, there is no Central law that protects healthcare workers.

What is the ground reality?

As per constitutional provisions, health and law and order are State subjects, and, therefore, it is the primary responsibility of the State government or Union Territory administration to take note of events and eventualities, and do what is necessary to prevent violence. The Union government has admitted that details of the number of fatalities of medical professionals due to attacks by families of patients are not maintained centrally.

Violence against healthcare workers at the workplace is not new in India. In 1973, Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug working as a junior nurse at King Edward Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, was sexually assaulted by a hospital sweeper. She died in 2015 after spending over 41 years in a vegetative state following the attack. Years later, doctors and other healthcare workers continue to demand specific and basic safety measures at hospitals including improved lighting, increased security, and installation of properly monitored security cameras.

'Healthcare centres should be declared safe zones with mandatory security measures in place'

Those protesting in Delhi point out that medical colleges often have ill-lit corridors, poorly secured wards, and long distances between departments. "There is an urgent need to improve working and living conditions by ensuring proper lighting, security guards, cameras, and manned walk-throughs between departments, operation theatres, and emergency areas. These simple measures could make a real difference," explain doctors. "We have repeatedly requested a safe work environment. This incident is a wake-up call. Doctors, particularly junior doctors working night shifts, and nurses – whether female or male – are increasingly under threat, not just physically but mentally as well. There is growing concern about their safety, lives, and mental health," said Dr. Praveen Gupta, principal director and chief of neurology, Fortis Hospital.

Demanding immediate systemic reforms to prevent such tragedies from happening again, Archana Dhawan Bajaj, gynaecologist, Nurture Clinic, added that a Central protection Act for doctors is crucial. "There is a need to improve the working conditions of junior doctors nationwide," she added. "Violence against healthcare workers is a global issue, but several countries have implemented effective measures to protect their medical professionals, setting examples that India could follow. The U.K.'s NHS enforces a zero-tolerance policy on violence, supported by a dedicated security team and a comprehensive reporting system. In the U.S., some States classify assaults on healthcare workers as felonies, acting as a strong deterrent. Australian hospitals have introduced safety measures like security personnel, panic buttons, and mandatory de-escalation training. India must urgently introduce a Central protection Act and adopt similar measures to take stringent actions to ensure a safer environment for its healthcare workers," said Dr. Sunita Kapoor, director, City X Ray & Scan Clinic.

What are the doctors demanding?

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), a national level association of allopathic doctors, maintained that at a policy level, the reluctance to acknowledge the violence on doctors at healthcare centres has to change. In a list of demands submitted to the Union government, it has sought hospital security protocols that are no less than those at an airport and that healthcare centres should be declared safe zones with mandatory security entitlements including CCTVs and deployment of security personnel. "The victim was on a 36-hour duty shift, and had no safe space to rest. The working and living conditions of resident doctors need a complete overhaul," the IMA said. IMA national president R.V. Asokan said doctors are also seeking a meticulous and professional investigation of the crime within a timeframe and also justice. "We want proper identification of the hooligans of vandalism and they should be awarded exemplary punishment. Appropriate and dignified compensation should be given to the bereaved family."

What are provisions brought in by Centre?

On August 16, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued an order that "in the event of any violence against any health care worker while on duty, the head of the institution shall be responsible for filing an institutional FIR within a maximum of six hours of the incident."

The order was issued in view of the fact that violence has become common against doctors and other healthcare staff in government hospitals. "A number of health workers suffer physical violence during the course of their duty... most of this violence is done by either [the] patient or patient's attendants," it said. Meanwhile, earlier this week, the National Medical Commission (NMC) directed all medical colleges to develop a policy for a safe work environment within the college and hospital campus for all staff members. It also said any incident of violence against medical students should be promptly investigated by the college management and an FIR should be lodged. "A detailed action taken report on any incident of violence should invariably be sent to the NMC within 48 hours of the incident," said the order.



Not safe: Members of the IMA stage a protest on Saturday against the rape and murder of a doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. PTI

Context: Doctors need a **Central Protection Act** has gained attention, highlighting the need for stronger legal safeguards for medical professionals across India.

Central Protection Act for Doctors

- **Also known as**: Prevention of Violence Against Healthcare Professionals and Clinical Establishments Bill, 2022.
- **Objective**: To define, prohibit, and penalize violence against healthcare professionals.
- **Provisions of the Protection Act:**
  - **Prohibition of Violence**: The Act prohibits violence against healthcare professionals and clinical establishments, including violence motivated by caste, gender, religion, language, or place of birth.
  - **Offences:** Offences under this Act are classified as cognizable and non-bailable, meaning offenders can be arrested without a warrant and tried by a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class.
  - **Grievance Mechanisms:** It establishes mechanisms to address grievances and aims to reduce long waiting periods in healthcare settings, which often contribute to conflicts.
  - **Medical Education Enhancement**: The Act suggests incorporating cognitive, psychomotor, and empathic skills into medical education to better prepare healthcare providers for handling conflicts with patients.
  - **Mandatory Reporting:** The Act requires mandatory reporting of incidents of violence against healthcare professionals and mandates the establishment of panels for investigation.
  - **Public Sensitization**: It includes provisions for public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the challenges faced by healthcare professionals.

BHAVISHYA - Promoting Digital Empowerment and Ease of Living for Pensioners

Context: Recently, the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare introduced 'Bhavishya'.

Bhavishya

- **About:** It is an online platform initiated by the Government of India to streamline the pension sanction and payment process for retiring central government employees.
- **Digital India Initiative**: It is a part of the Digital India initiative, designed to improve the ease of living for pensioners by ensuring timely and accurate pension disbursements.
- **Recognition:** BHAVISHYA was ranked 3rd best in the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) in 2021.
- **Nodal Agency:** The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions
- **Objectives**:
  - **Timely Benefits**: Ensure retirees receive all retirement benefits and pensions promptly.
  - **Case Processing**: Ensure timely processing of pension cases at each administrative level.
  - **Pension Tracking:** Allow retirees to track their pension cases online.
  - **Guidance**: Assist retirees in completing forms as per CCS Pension Rules and guide them through the retirement process.
- **Features:**
  - **Auto Registration of Retirees**: Bhavishya integrates with payroll systems to automatically register employees nearing retirement and provides Management Information System (MIS) data on upcoming retirements within the next 15 months.
  - **Self-Registration for Stakeholders**: Stakeholders, including DDOs, Heads of Offices (HOO), and Pay and Accounts Officers (PAO), can self-register and manage their pension forms, enhancing process efficiency and minimizing errors.
  - **Strict Timelines**: Pension processing starts 15 months before retirement with strict deadlines and automatic reminders to ensure timely completion and adherence to schedules.
  - **Transparency and Accountability:** The system offers full transparency in the pension process, facilitating the identification and resolution of delays and ensuring accountability throughout.

INDIAN EXPRESS

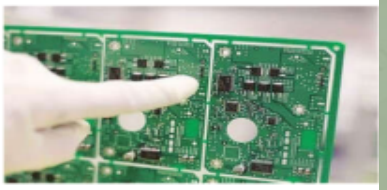
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MAKE IN INDIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

China dominates supply of electronic components for 'made in India' products

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 17



In FY24, electronic components imports stood at $34.4 bn. File

IN THE financial year 2023-24, India imported electronic components worth over $12 billion from China and $6 billion from Hong Kong, with the two accounting for more than half of total such imports to India – suggesting that the country's growing footprint in electronics manufacturing may not yet be translating into reduced reliance on Beijing.

In the last five years, electronics imports from China and Hong Kong have far outnumbered imports from other major manufacturing hubs like South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and all ASEAN countries, combined.

In fact, in 2023-24, electronic components imports stood at $34.4 billion, making them the fifth largest commodity to be imported to India, after crude, gold, petroleum products, and coal, according to data sourced from the Ministry of Commerce. These components constitute key building blocks for the finished electronics products that are currently being assembled in India – from smartphones to televisions.

Import share from China, Hong Kong

In the financial year 2019-20, electronic components imports from China and Hong Kong stood at over $10 billion, accounting for 62 per cent of the total imports in the category. A year later, in 2020-21, while the value of such imports from the two countries dipped slightly to $9.5 billion, their share of the overall imports remained constant at 62 per cent.

In 2021-22, the value of such imports from China and Hong Kong nearly doubled to $17.7 billion, accounting for more than 68 per cent of the total imports. 2022-23 was a bit of an outlier year, when the share of China and Hong Kong in exporting electronic components to India marginally dipped below 50 per cent for the first time in five years, to 49.7 per cent.

Experts said imports from Hong Kong should be seen as Chinese imports since it is companies from the mainland who run some of their operations in the territory.

The overall picture of India's reliance on Chinese supply of electronic components becomes clearer when compared to the imports from some other electronics hubs – such as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and ASEAN countries which include the likes of Vietnam and Malaysia.

In the last five years, barring 2022-23, the quantum of import of electronic components from China alone has outnumbered such imports from South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and all ASEAN countries, combined. Put together, imports from China and Hong Kong have been more than the other countries in each of the last five years. This is despite India having free trade agreements with ASEAN countries, Japan and South Korea.

Growth in domestic electronics assembly

India's emergence as an electronics assembly hub for smartphones has been notable. Today, almost all phones sold in India have been assembled locally in the country, with companies like Apple also exporting phones that were assembled in India. For instance, India exported smartphones worth around $15 billion in 2023-24, of which iPhones contributed 65 per cent, or about $10 billion – up from $5 billion in the previous year.

But, that growth has meant that India's reliance on imported electronic components – such as printed circuit boards, integrated circuits, advanced displays, camera modules etc. – has increased given that the country currently lacks any substantial manufacturing base for these crucial components.

"China has built its manufacturing base over the last three-four decades. It is very difficult to rapidly decouple from them given that they are the biggest producers of the components that India would need for its domestic manufacturing processes," a senior government official said.

Take Apple as an example. While the company's expansion in India has meant more of its suppliers are looking to set shop in the country, in 2023, as many as 157 Apple contractors manufactured in mainland China, up from 151 the previous year. The number of Indian suppliers, however, remained stagnant at 14.

Govt incentives & future prospects

To remedy the situation, the government is understood to be working on an incentive scheme for electronic components. "The details are currently being worked out, but the overall outlay could be between Rs 30,000 crore - Rs 40,000 crore," a second government official said requesting anonymity.

Even as India's factory output for smartphones has risen, leading to a steady rise in exports, local value addition has not increased to a desirable amount. Currently, local value addition in mobile phone assembly is around 15 per cent, while a healthier number would be around 35-40 per cent. As tensions at the border in the last few years have proven to be the nadir of India-China relations, New Delhi as moved towards an economic blockade of sorts – its actions include banning China-based social media companies like TikTok, increasing scrutiny on investments from the mainland, excluding Chinese products from some telecom equipment on account of national security, and visa restrictions on Chinese technicians.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Context: China holds a dominant position in supplying electronic components essential for 'Made in India' products, significantly impacting India's manufacturing sector.

Make in India

- **Launched in:** 2014 to position India as a top global manufacturing and investment destination.
- **Led by**: Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Objective**: To make India an integral part of the global supply chain.
- **Four Pillars of Make in India:**
    - **New Processes**: Emphasizes 'Ease of Doing Business' as a key factor, with initiatives to de-license and deregulate industries throughout their lifecycle.
    - **New Infrastructure**: Government aims to develop industrial corridors, enhance existing infrastructure, and implement a fast-paced registration system to support industry growth.
    - **New Sectors**: Identifies 27 sectors in manufacturing, infrastructure, and services, with detailed information available through an interactive web portal and brochures.
    - **New Mindset:** Seeks a paradigm shift in government-industry interaction, with the government acting as a facilitator in economic development rather than just a regulator.
- **Make in India 2.0**: Creating a conducive environment for investment, modern and efficient infrastructure, opening up new sectors for foreign investment and forging a partnership between government and industry through positive mindset.
- **Top 3 importers of Electronic Goods:** Vietnam , South Korea, and United States.

THE HINDU | Science II

BLUE MOON

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Geography)

Blue moon: a baleful sequela?

Vasudevan Mukunth



A blue moon rises above the Apollo Temple of ancient Corinth, Greece, on August 30, 2023. AFP

The blue moon is a common example of an invented tradition – something someone has claimed is an old, time-honoured practice but which was in fact invented more recently. A second full moon in a single month is usually called a blue moon. But there are other ways in which the moon can be blue, such as literally.

For example, on April 5, 1815, Mt. Tambora in contemporary Indonesia produced the most powerful volcanic eruption in recorded history. The previous year, the Mayon volcano had erupted powerfully in the Philippines.

The effects of these volcanoes, combined with other climatic factors, lowered the temperature of the earth by 0.4–0.7 °C in 1816, producing what has since been called the "year without summer". The dust and other small particles lingering in the air could have caused the moon to look blue, as indicated by a description in the poem *Alastor*, written by Percy Bysshe Shelley that fateful year.

After the Krakatoa caldera exploded in 1883, the Royal Society in London recorded that the moon appeared blue, and the Sun a shade of green, in many parts of the world.

The use of 'blue moon' as a metaphor for a long period of time emerged in the early 1820s, and its use to describe the second full moon of a month came about in a farmers' almanac published in the U.S. in 1937. August 2023 had such a blue moon.

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Context: On August 19, 2024, a stunning full Moon will light up the skies across various time zones around the world. This celestial event promises to captivate viewers globally.

Blue Moon

- **About**: The term "Blue Moon" has historically referred to the third full Moon in a season that has four full Moons, a relatively rare occurrence.
- **Historical Definition**: Originally, "Blue Moon" referred to the third full Moon in a season with four full Moons, a rare occurrence recorded as early as 1528.
- **Modern Definition**: Since the 1940s, the term also describes the second full Moon in a single calendar month, which happens because the lunar cycle is about 29.5 days.
- **Frequency**: Two full Moons in one month, or a Blue Moon, happens approximately every two to three years.
- **There are two types of Blue Moons**: Monthly and Seasonal
    - A monthly blue moon is the second full moon in a calendar month, while a seasonal blue moon is the third full moon in an astronomical season with four full moons.
- **Super Moon**: It occurs when the moon's orbit is closest (perigee) to Earth at the same time it is full.
- **Super Blue Moon**: It is simultaneously a full moon, blue moon, and a super moon.
    - Supermoons occur about 25% of the time, and Blue Moons about 3%, making a combination of both exceptionally rare, occurring roughly every 10 years.

PIB Aug 18

FEMA RULES, 2024

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Department of Economic Affairs amends Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019 in pursuance of Union Budget 2024-25 announcement

Context: The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, has amended the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, to streamline regulations concerning Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Overseas Investment.

Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2024

- **Cross-border Share Swaps**: Simplifies the process for cross-border share swaps, allowing for the issue or transfer of Indian company equity instruments in exchange for foreign company equity instruments.
    - Facilitates global expansion of Indian companies through mergers, acquisitions, and strategic initiatives, helping them enter new markets and grow internationally.
- **FDI in White Label ATMs**: Permits 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) under the Automatic Route in White Label ATMs.
    - Aims to enhance financial inclusion across the country by allowing non-banks to set up, own, and operate ATMs.
- **Definition of 'Startup Company'**: Aligns the definition of 'Startup Company' with the 2019 notification by the Department of Industry and Internal Trade.
    - **An entity qualifies as a startup if it is**:
        - Incorporated as a private limited company or registered as a partnership firm or a limited liability partnership.
        - Within 10 years from its incorporation or registration.
        - Has a turnover not exceeding ₹100 crore in any of the financial years since incorporation or registration.

Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999

- **About**: FEMA primarily addresses provisions related to cross-border trade and payments, defining procedures for foreign exchange transactions in India.
- **Introduced**: In 1999.
- **Replacement of FERA:** FEMA replaced the earlier Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) and has since governed foreign exchange transactions in the country.
- **Headquarter**: Delhi.

DOWN TO EARTH

Aug 18

FOREVER CHEMICALS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Remnants of the present: 'Forever chemicals' can now be tracked and managed from source to destination

Context: In a major breakthrough aimed at managing the long-term environmental impact of anthropogenic activity, American researchers have found a method to be able to trace the origin and the destination of forever chemicals.

Forever Chemicals

- **Definition**: Forever chemicals, or PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), encompass over 9,000 synthetic chemicals used since the 1940s.
- **Persistence:** These chemicals are termed "forever chemicals" due to their resistance to degradation in the environment and human body.
- **Common Types of PFAS**:
  - **PFOA**: Perfluorooctanoic acid, a well-known type of PFAS.
  - **PFOS**: Perfluorooctane sulfonate, another extensively studied PFAS compound.
- **Unique Properties**: PFAS are characterized by strong carbon-fluorine bonds, making them resistant to heat, water, oil, and stains.
- **Common Applications**: They are used in nonstick cookware (e.g., Teflon), water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics and carpets, food packaging (e.g., microwave popcorn bags), firefighting foams, and cosmetics.
- **Impact**:
  - **Exposure Routes:** PFAS exposure can occur through contaminated water, food, air, and consumer products.
  - **Health Concerns**: Health issues linked to PFAS include increased cholesterol levels, altered liver enzymes, decreased vaccine response in children, elevated cancer risks (kidney and testicular), pregnancy complications, and thyroid disease.
  - **Contamination Spread**: PFAS contamination is widespread, affecting water sources, soil, and wildlife.
  - **Longevity and Risks:** Their persistence in the environment poses long-term ecological risks, as they can remain for thousands of years without degrading.

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